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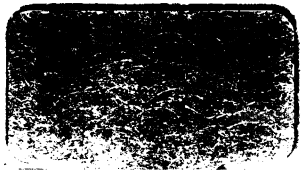
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Walden Edition

THE WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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A Windmill (page 34)

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THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

IV
CAPE COD
AND
MISCELLANIES

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1906

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE ix

CAPE COD

I. THE SHIPWRECK 3
II. STAGE-COACH VIEWS 19
III. THE PLAINS OF NAUSET 31
IV. THE BEACH 57
V. THE WELLFLEET OYSTERMAN 79
VI. THE BEACH AGAIN 102
VII. ACROSS THE CAPE 129
VIII. THE HIGHLAND LIGHT 150
IX. THE SEA AND THE DESERT 176
X. PROVINCETOWN 212

MISCELLANIES

THE SERVICE: QUALITIES OF THE RECRUIT 277
PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED 280
HERALD OF FREEDOM 306
WENDELL PHILLIPS BEFORE THE CONCORD LYCEUM 311
THOMAS CARLYLE AND HIS WORKS 316
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE 356

Digitized by Google

SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS 388

A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN 409

THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN BROWN 441

AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN BROWN 451

LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE 455

INDEX 483

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ILLUSTRATIONS

A WINDMILL (*page* 34)	*Frontispiece*
SUNSET, CHATHAM HARBOR	26
THE PLAINS OF NAUSET	40
BEACH BLUFFS, WELLFLEET SHORE	62
SHELLS ON THE BEACH	110

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In the same year as "The Maine Woods," but as a Christmas book dated 1865, appeared "Cape Cod," also edited by William Ellery Channing and published by Ticknor & Fields. The first four chapters of the book had already been printed by their author in *Putnam's Magazine* in 1855, and chapters v and viii were printed, just in advance of publication in the book, in *The Atlantic Monthly* in October and December, 1864.

Thoreau has recorded his adventures in this book, and shows that he enjoyed the humor which attended his intercourse with the independent, self-reliant folk of what was then more than now a singularly isolated arm of the State. Mr. Channing adds, in his book on Thoreau, "One of the old Cod could not believe that Thoreau was not a pedler; but said, after explanations failed, 'Well, it makes no odds what else it is you carry, so long as you carry truth along with you.'"

It should be borne in mind by the reader that a considerable part of this book never received its final revision at the hands of its author.

The papers here grouped under the title "Miscellanies" are the product of the somewhat less known Thoreau, the student of human life, of literature and religion, though the reader may easily have discovered both sides of his nature in "A Week," which blends observation and reflection, and is a transcript from a

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diary which records the march of the "daughters of Time," as

> "To each they offer gifts after his will,
> Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all."

The several papers are arranged substantially in the order of their first appearance. One only, formerly printed among Thoreau's writings, is omitted, for "Prayers," as Mr. Edward W. Emerson shows,[1] was written by Mr. R. W. Emerson, and published by him in *The Dial*. The verses included in it were alone by Thoreau.

The earliest production of Thoreau which has found its way into print appears to be an essay, dated July, 1840, and headed "The Service; Qualities of the Recruit." Mr. Sanborn, who read extracts from this essay before the Concord Summer School of Philosophy in 1882, states that it was the one offered to *The Dial* which Miss Margaret Fuller rejected, accompanying her rejection with criticism, as narrated by Mr. Sanborn in his Life of Thoreau. These extracts are reprinted here from the collection of "Concord Lectures in Philosophy," published by Moses King, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Paradise (to be) Regained" was in the form of a review of a book by J. A. Etzler, and was published in *The Democratic Review*, New York, for November, 1843. It was written during Thoreau's short residence in Staten Island.

"Herald of Freedom" was printed in *The Dial*, April, 1844, as a commendatory notice of the anti-

[1] *Emerson in Concord*, p. 138.

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slavery paper of that name conducted by the fearless Nathaniel P. Rogers.

"Wendell Phillips before the Concord Lyceum" was a letter addressed to Mr. Garrison, the editor of *The Liberator*, and published in that journal, March 28, 1845.

"Thomas Carlyle and his Works" was printed first in *Graham's Magazine*, March and April, 1847. It was written during Thoreau's stay at Walden. The history of his adventure in getting the article published is amusingly told in the letters written by his faithful friend Horace Greeley, who acted as his intermediary. The letters will be found in Mr. Sanborn's "Thoreau," pages 219–224.

"Civil Disobedience," under the title "Resistance to Civil Government," was printed in 1849 in the first number of *Æsthetic Papers*, edited by Miss Elizabeth Peabody.

"Slavery in Massachusetts" was an address delivered at the Antislavery Convention at Framingham, Massachusetts, July 4, 1854, and was printed in *The Liberator* for July 21 of the same year.

"A Plea for Captain John Brown" was read before the citizens of Concord, Massachusetts, October 30, 1859. It was taken from his diary written during the eventful period of Brown's expedition. When Captain Brown lay in prison, Thoreau did not wait for a public meeting, but went about among his neighbors, summoning them to come together to hear what he had to say. "The Last Days of John Brown" was read for the author at North Elba, July 4, 1860, and was printed in *The Liberator* on the 27th of the same month. "After

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the Death of John Brown" contains the remarks made at Concord by Thoreau on the day of the execution. It is reprinted from a volume entitled "Echoes from Harper's Ferry."

"Life without Principle" is a posthumous paper first published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1863.

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CAPE COD

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I

THE SHIPWRECK

WISHING to get a better view than I had yet had of the ocean, which, we are told, covers more than two thirds of the globe, but of which a man who lives a few miles inland may never see any trace, more than of another world, I made a visit to Cape Cod in October, 1849, another the succeeding June, and another to Truro in July, 1855; the first and last time with a single companion, the second time alone. I have spent, in all, about three weeks on the Cape; walked from Eastham to Provincetown twice on the Atlantic side, and once on the Bay side also, excepting four or five miles, and crossed the Cape half a dozen times on my way; but having come so fresh to the sea, I have got but little salted. My readers must expect only so much saltness as the land breeze acquires from blowing over an arm of the sea, or is tasted on the windows and the bark of trees twenty miles inland, after September gales. I have been accustomed to make excursions to the ponds within ten miles of Concord, but latterly I have extended my excursions to the seashore.

I did not see why I might not make a book on Cape Cod, as well as my neighbor on "Human Culture." It is but another name for the same thing, and hardly a sandier phase of it. As for my title, I suppose that the word Cape is from the French *cap;* which is from

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the Latin *caput*, a head; which is, perhaps, from the verb *capere*, to take, — that being the part by which we take hold of a thing: — Take Time by the forelock. It is also the safest part to take a serpent by. And as for Cod, that was derived directly from that "great store of cod-fish" which Captain Bartholomew Gosnold caught there in 1602; which fish appears to have been so called from the Saxon word *codde*, "a case in which seeds are lodged," either from the form of the fish, or the quantity of spawn it contains; whence also, perhaps, codling ("*pomum coctile*"?) and coddle, — to cook green like peas. (V. Dic.)

Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts: the shoulder is at Buzzard's Bay; the elbow, or crazy-bone, at Cape Mallebarre; the wrist at Truro; and the sandy fist at Provincetown, — behind which the State stands on her guard, with her back to the Green Mountains, and her feet planted on the floor of the ocean, like an athlete protecting her Bay, — boxing with northeast storms, and, ever and anon, heaving up her Atlantic adversary from the lap of earth, — ready to thrust forward her other fist, which keeps guard the while upon her breast at Cape Ann.

On studying the map, I saw that there must be an uninterrupted beach on the east or outside of the forearm of the Cape, more than thirty miles from the general line of the coast, which would afford a good sea view, but that, on account of an opening in the beach, forming the entrance to Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, I must strike it in Eastham, if I approached it by land, and probably I could walk thence straight to Race

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Point, about twenty-eight miles, and not meet with any obstruction.

We left Concord, Massachusetts, on Tuesday, October 9, 1849. On reaching Boston, we found that the Provincetown steamer, which should have got in the day before, had not yet arrived, on account of a violent storm; and, as we noticed in the streets a hand-bill headed, "Death! one hundred and forty-five lives lost at Cohasset," we decided to go by way of Cohasset. We found many Irish in the cars, going to identify bodies and to sympathize with the survivors, and also to attend the funeral which was to take place in the afternoon; and when we arrived at Cohasset, it appeared that nearly all the passengers were bound for the beach, which was about a mile distant, and many other persons were flocking in from the neighboring country. There were several hundreds of them streaming off over Cohasset Common in that direction, some on foot and some in wagons; and among them were some sportsmen in their hunting-jackets, with their guns, and game-bags, and dogs. As we passed the graveyard we saw a large hole, like a cellar, freshly dug there, and, just before reaching the shore, by a pleasantly winding and rocky road, we met several hay-riggings and farm-wagons coming away toward the meeting-house, each loaded with three large, rough deal boxes. We did not need to ask what was in them. The owners of the wagons were made the undertakers. Many horses in carriages were fastened to the fences near the shore, and, for a mile or more, up and down, the beach was covered with people looking out for

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bodies, and examining the fragments of the wreck. There was a small island called Brook Island, with a hut on it, lying just off the shore. This is said to be the rockiest shore in Massachusetts, — from Nantasket to Scituate, — hard sienitic rocks, which the waves have laid bare, but have not been able to crumble. It has been the scene of many a shipwreck.

The brig St. John, from Galway, Ireland, laden with emigrants, was wrecked on Sunday morning; it was now Tuesday morning, and the sea was still breaking violently on the rocks. There were eighteen or twenty of the same large boxes that I have mentioned, lying on a green hillside, a few rods from the water, and surrounded by a crowd. The bodies which had been recovered, twenty-seven or eight in all, had been collected there. Some were rapidly nailing down the lids, others were carting the boxes away, and others were lifting the lids, which were yet loose, and peeping under the cloths, — for each body, with such rags as still adhered to it, was covered loosely with a white sheet. I witnessed no signs of grief, but there was a sober dispatch of business which was affecting. One man was seeking to identify a particular body, and one undertaker or carpenter was calling to another to know in what box a certain child was put. I saw many marble feet and matted heads as the cloths were raised, and one livid, swollen, and mangled body of a drowned girl, — who probably had intended to go out to service in some American family, — to which some rags still adhered, with a string, half concealed by the flesh, about its swollen neck; the coiled-up wreck of a

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human hulk, gashed by the rocks or fishes, so that the bone and muscle were exposed, but quite bloodless, — merely red and white, — with wide-open and staring eyes, yet lustreless, deadlights; or like the cabin windows of a stranded vessel, filled with sand. Sometimes there were two or more children, or a parent and child, in the same box, and on the lid would, perhaps, be written with red chalk, "Bridget such-a-one, and sister's child." The surrounding sward was covered with bits of sails and clothing. I have since heard, from one who lives by this beach, that a woman who had come over before, but had left her infant behind for her sister to bring, came and looked into these boxes, and saw in one — probably the same whose superscription I have quoted — her child in her sister's arms, as if the sister had meant to be found thus; and within three days after, the mother died from the effect of that sight.

We turned from this and walked along the rocky shore. In the first cove were strewn what seemed the fragments of a vessel, in small pieces mixed with sand and seaweed, and great quantities of feathers; but it looked so old and rusty, that I at first took it to be some old wreck which had lain there many years. I even thought of Captain Kidd, and that the feathers were those which sea-fowl had cast there; and perhaps there might be some tradition about it in the neighborhood. I asked a sailor if that was the St. John. He said it was. I asked him where she struck. He pointed to a rock in front of us, a mile from the shore, called the Grampus Rock, and added, —

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"You can see a part of her now sticking up; it looks like a small boat."

I saw it. It was thought to be held by the chain-cables and the anchors. I asked if the bodies which I saw were all that were drowned.

"Not a quarter of them," said he.

"Where are the rest?"

"Most of them right underneath that piece you see."

It appeared to us that there was enough rubbish to make the wreck of a large vessel in this cove alone, and that it would take many days to cart it off. It was several feet deep, and here and there was a bonnet or a jacket on it. In the very midst of the crowd about this wreck, there were men with carts busily collecting the seaweed which the storm had cast up, and conveying it beyond the reach of the tide, though they were often obliged to separate fragments of clothing from it, and they might at any moment have found a human body under it. Drown who might, they did not forget that this weed was a valuable manure. This shipwreck had not produced a visible vibration in the fabric of society.

About a mile south we could see, rising above the rocks, the masts of the British brig which the St. John had endeavored to follow, which had slipped her cables, and, by good luck, run into the mouth of Cohasset Harbor. A little further along the shore we saw a man's clothes on a rock; further, a woman's scarf, a gown, a straw bonnet, the brig's caboose, and one of her masts high and dry, broken into several pieces. In another

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rocky cove, several rods from the water, and behind rocks twenty feet high, lay a part of one side of the vessel, still hanging together. It was, perhaps, forty feet long, by fourteen wide. I was even more surprised at the power of the waves, exhibited on this shattered fragment, than I had been at the sight of the smaller fragments before. The largest timbers and iron braces were broken superfluously, and I saw that no material could withstand the power of the waves; that iron must go to pieces in such a case, and an iron vessel would be cracked up like an egg-shell on the rocks. Some of these timbers, however, were so rotten that I could almost thrust my umbrella through them. They told us that some were saved on this piece, and also showed where the sea had heaved it into this cove which was now dry. When I saw where it had come in, and in what condition, I wondered that any had been saved on it. A little further on, a crowd of men was collected around the mate of the St. John, who was telling his story. He was a slim-looking youth, who spoke of the captain as the master, and seemed a little excited. He was saying that when they jumped into the boat, she filled, and, the vessel lurching, the weight of the water in the boat caused the painter to break, and so they were separated. Whereat one man came away, saying, —

"Well, I don't see but he tells a straight story enough. You see, the weight of the water in the boat broke the painter. A boat full of water is very heavy," — and so on, in a loud and impertinently earnest tone, as if he had a bet depending on it, but had no humane interest in the matter.

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Another, a large man, stood near by upon a rock, gazing into the sea, and chewing large quids of tobacco, as if that habit were forever confirmed with him.

"Come," says another to his companion, "let's be off. We've seen the whole of it. It's no use to stay to the funeral."

Further, we saw one standing upon a rock, who, we were told, was one that was saved. He was a sober-looking man, dressed in a jacket and gray pantaloons, with his hands in the pockets. I asked him a few questions, which he answered; but he seemed unwilling to talk about it, and soon walked away. By his side stood one of the life-boat men, in an oilcloth jacket, who told us how they went to the relief of the British brig, thinking that the boat of the St. John, which they passed on the way, held all her crew, — for the waves prevented their seeing those who were on the vessel, though they might have saved some had they known there were any there. A little further was the flag of the St. John, spread on a rock to dry, and held down by stones at the corners.. This frail, but essential and significant portion of the vessel, which had so long been the sport of the winds, was sure to reach the shore. There were one or two houses visible from these rocks, in which were some of the survivors recovering from the shock which their bodies and minds had sustained. One was not expected to live.

We kept on down the shore as far as a promontory called Whitehead, that we might see more of the Cohasset Rocks. In a little cove, within half a mile, there were an old man and his son collecting, with their team,

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the seaweed which that fatal storm had cast up, as serenely employed as if there had never been a wreck in the world, though they were within sight of the Grampus Rock, on which the St. John had struck. The old man had heard that there was a wreck and knew most of the particulars, but he said that he had not been up there since it happened. It was the wrecked weed that concerned him most, rockweed, kelp, and seaweed, as he named them, which he carted to his barnyard; and those bodies were to him but other weeds which the tide cast up, but which were of no use to him. We afterwards came to the life-boat in its harbor, waiting for another emergency; and in the afternoon we saw the funeral procession at a distance, at the head of which walked the captain with the other survivors.

On the whole, it was not so impressive a scene as I might have expected. If I had found one body cast upon the beach in some lonely place, it would have affected me more. I sympathized rather with the winds and waves, as if to toss and mangle these poor human bodies was the order of the day. If this was the law of Nature, why waste any time in awe or pity? If the last day were come, we should not think so much about the separation of friends or the blighted prospects of individuals. I saw that corpses might be multiplied, as on the field of battle, till they no longer affected us in any degree as exceptions to the common lot of humanity. Take all the graveyards together, they are always the majority. It is the individual and private that demands our sympathy. A man can attend but one funeral in the course of his life, can behold but

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one corpse. Yet I saw that the inhabitants of the shore would be not a little affected by this event. They would watch there many days and nights for the sea to give up its dead, and their imaginations and sympathies would supply the place of mourners far away, who as yet knew not of the wreck. Many days after this, something white was seen floating on the water by one who was sauntering on the beach. It was approached in a boat, and found to be the body of a woman, which had risen in an upright position, whose white cap was blown back with the wind. I saw that the beauty of the shore itself was wrecked for many a lonely walker there, until he could perceive, at last, how its beauty was enhanced by wrecks like this, and it acquired thus a rarer and sublimer beauty still.

Why care for these dead bodies? They really have no friends but the worms or fishes. Their owners were coming to the New World, as Columbus and the Pilgrims did; they were within a mile of its shores; but, before they could reach it, they emigrated to a newer world than ever Columbus dreamed of, yet one of whose existence we believe that there is far more universal and convincing evidence — though it has not yet been discovered by science — than Columbus had of this: not merely mariners' tales and some paltry driftwood and seaweed, but a continual drift and instinct to all our shores. I saw their empty hulks that came to land; but they themselves, meanwhile, were cast upon some shore yet further west, toward which we are all tending, and which we shall reach at last, it

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may be through storm and darkness, as they did. No doubt, we have reason to thank God that they have not been "shipwrecked into life again." The mariner who makes the safest port in heaven, perchance, seems to his friends on earth to be shipwrecked, for they deem Boston Harbor the better place; though perhaps, invisible to them, a skillful pilot comes to meet him, and the fairest and balmiest gales blow off that coast, his good ship makes the land in halcyon days, and he kisses the shore in rapture there, while his old hulk tosses in the surf here. It is hard to part with one's body, but, no doubt, it is easy enough to do without it when once it is gone. All their plans and hopes burst like a bubble! Infants by the score dashed on the rocks by the enraged Atlantic Ocean! No, no! If the St. John did not make her port here, she has been telegraphed there. The strongest wind cannot stagger a Spirit; it is a Spirit's breath. A just man's purpose cannot be split on any Grampus or material rock, but itself will split rocks till it succeeds.

The verses addressed to Columbus dying may, with slight alterations, be applied to the passengers of the St. John, —

"Soon with them will all be over,
Soon the voyage will be begun
That shall bear them to discover,
Far away, a land unknown.

"Land that each, alone, must visit,
But no tidings bring to men;
For no sailor, once departed,
Ever hath returned again.

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"No carved wood, no broken branches
Ever drift from that far wild;
He who on that ocean launches
Meets no corse of angel child.

"Undismayed, my noble sailors,
Spread, then spread your canvas out;
Spirits! on a sea of ether
Soon shall ye serenely float!

"Where the deep no plummet soundeth,
Fear no hidden breakers there,
And the fanning wing of angels
Shall your bark right onward bear.

"Quit, now, full of heart and comfort,
These rude shores, they are of earth;
Where the rosy clouds are parting,
There the blessed isles loom forth."

One summer day, since this, I came this way, on foot, along the shore from Boston. It was so warm that some horses had climbed to the very top of the ramparts of the old fort at Hull, where there was hardly room to turn round, for the sake of the breeze. The *Datura Stramonium*, or thorn-apple, was in full bloom along the beach; and, at sight of this cosmopolite, this Captain Cook among plants, carried in ballast all over the world, I felt as if I were on the highway of nations. Say, rather, this Viking, king of the Bays, for it is not an innocent plant; it suggests not merely commerce, but its attendant vices, as if its fibres were the stuff of which pirates spin their yarns. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel, half a mile from the shore, which sounded as if they were in a

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barn in the country, they being between the sails. It was a purely rural sound. As I looked over the water, I saw the isles rapidly wasting away, the sea nibbling voraciously at the continent, the springing arch of a hill suddenly interrupted, as at Point Allerton, — what botanists might call premorse, — showing, by its curve against the sky, how much space it must have occupied, where now was water only. On the other hand, these wrecks of isles were being fancifully arranged into new shores, as at Hog Island, inside of Hull, where everything seemed to be gently lapsing into futurity. This isle had got the very form of a ripple, and I thought that the inhabitants should bear a ripple for device on their shields, a wave passing over them, with the datura, which is said to produce mental alienation of long duration without affecting the bodily health,[1] springing from its edge. The most interesting thing which I heard of, in

[1] The Jamestown-weed, or thorn-apple. "This, being an early plant, was gathered very young for a boiled salad, by some of the soldiers sent thither [*i. e.*, to Virginia] to quell the rebellion of Bacon; and some of them ate plentifully of it, the effect of which was a very pleasant comedy, for they turned natural fools upon it for several days: one would blow up a feather in the air; another would dart straws at it with much fury; and another, stark naked, was sitting up in a corner like a monkey, grinning and making mows at them; a fourth would fondly kiss and paw his companions, and sneer in their faces, with a countenance more antic than any in a Dutch droll. In this frantic condition they were confined, lest they should, in their folly, destroy themselves, — though it was observed that all their actions were full of innocence and good nature. Indeed, they were not very cleanly. A thousand such simple tricks they played, and after eleven days returned to themselves again, not remembering anything that had passed." — Beverley's *History of Virginia*, p. 120.

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this township of Hull, was an unfailing spring, whose locality was pointed out to me on the side of a distant hill, as I was panting along the shore, though I did not visit it. Perhaps, if I should go through Rome, it would be some spring on the Capitoline Hill I should remember the longest. It is true, I was somewhat interested in the well at the old French fort, which was said to be ninety feet deep, with a cannon at the bottom of it. On Nantasket Beach I counted a dozen chaises from the public house. From time to time the riders turned their horses toward the sea, standing in the water for the coolness; and I saw the value of beaches to cities for the sea-breeze and the bath.

At Jerusalem Village, the inhabitants were collecting in haste, before a thunder-shower now approaching, the Irish moss which they had spread to dry. The shower passed on one side, and gave me a few drops only, which did not cool the air. I merely felt a puff upon my cheek, though, within sight, a vessel was capsized in the bay, and several others dragged their anchors, and were near going ashore. The sea bathing at Cohasset Rocks was perfect. The water was purer and more transparent than any I had ever seen. There was not a particle of mud or slime about it. The bottom being sandy, I could see the sea perch swimming about. The smooth and fantastically worn rocks, and the perfectly clean and tress-like rockweeds falling over you, and attached so firmly to the rocks that you could pull yourself up by them, greatly enhanced the luxury of the bath. The stripe of barnacles just above the weeds reminded me of some vegetable growth,— the buds, and

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petals, and seed-vessels of flowers. They lay along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat. It was one of the hottest days in the year, yet I found the water so icy cold that I could swim but a stroke or two, and thought that, in case of shipwreck, there would be more danger of being chilled to death than simply drowned. One immersion was enough to make you forget the dog-days utterly. Though you were sweltering before, it will take you half an hour now to remember that it was ever warm. There were the tawny rocks, like lions couchant, defying the ocean, whose waves incessantly dashed against and scoured them with vast quantities of gravel. The water held in their little hollows on the receding of the tide was so crystalline that I could not believe it salt, but wished to drink it; and higher up were basins of fresh water left by the rain, — all which, being also of different depths and temperature, were convenient for different kinds of baths. Also, the larger hollows in the smoothed rocks formed the most convenient of seats and dressing-rooms. In these respects it was the most perfect seashore that I had seen.

I saw in Cohasset, separated from the sea only by a narrow beach, a handsome but shallow lake of some four hundred acres, which, I was told, the sea had tossed over the beach in a great storm in the spring, and, after the alewives had passed into it, it had stopped up its outlet, and now the alewives were dying by thousands, and the inhabitants were apprehending a pestilence as the water evaporated. It had five rocky islets in it.

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This rocky shore is called Pleasant Cove on some maps; on the map of Cohasset, that name appears to be confined to the particular cove where I saw the wreck of the St. John. The ocean did not look, now, as if any were ever shipwrecked in it; it was not grand and sublime, but beautiful as a lake. Not a vestige of a wreck was visible, nor could I believe that the bones of many a shipwrecked man were buried in that pure sand. But to go on with our first excursion.

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II

STAGE-COACH VIEWS

After spending the night in Bridgewater, and picking up a few arrowheads there in the morning, we took the cars for Sandwich, where we arrived before noon. This was the terminus of the "Cape Cod Railroad," though it is but the beginning of the Cape. As it rained hard, with driving mists, and there was no sign of its holding up, we here took that almost obsolete conveyance, the stage, for "as far as it went that day," as we told the driver. We had forgotten how far a stage could go in a day, but we were told that the Cape roads were very "heavy," though they added that being of sand, the rain would improve them. This coach was an exceedingly narrow one, but as there was a slight spherical excess over two on a seat, the driver waited till nine passengers had got in, without taking the measure of any of them, and then shut the door after two or three ineffectual slams, as if the fault were all in the hinges or the latch, — while we timed our inspirations and expirations so as to assist him.

We were now fairly on the Cape, which extends from Sandwich eastward thirty-five miles, and thence north and northwest thirty more, in all sixty-five, and has an average breadth of about five miles. In the interior it rises to the height of two hundred, and sometimes perhaps three hundred feet above the level of the sea.

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According to Hitchcock, the geologist of the State, it is composed almost entirely of sand, even to the depth of three hundred feet in some places, though there is probably a concealed core of rock a little beneath the surface, and it is of diluvian origin, excepting a small portion at the extremity and elsewhere along the shores, which is alluvial. For the first half of the Cape large blocks of stone are found, here and there, mixed with the sand, but for the last thirty miles boulders, or even gravel, are rarely met with. Hitchcock conjectures that the ocean has, in course of time, eaten out Boston Harbor and other bays in the mainland, and that the minute fragments have been deposited by the currents at a distance from the shore, and formed this sand-bank. Above the sand, if the surface is subjected to agricultural tests, there is found to be a thin layer of soil gradually diminishing from Barnstable to Truro, where it ceases; but there are many holes and rents in this weather-beaten garment not likely to be stitched in time, which reveal the naked flesh of the Cape, and its extremity is completely bare.

I at once got out my book, the eighth volume of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, printed in 1802, which contains some short notices of the Cape towns, and began to read up to where I was, for in the cars I could not read as fast as I traveled. To those who came from the side of Plymouth, it said, "After riding through a body of woods, twelve miles in extent, interspersed with but few houses, the settlement of Sandwich appears, with a more agreeable effect, to the eye of the traveler." Another writer

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speaks of this as a beautiful village. But I think that our villages will bear to be contrasted only with one another, not with nature. I have no great respect for the writer's taste, who talks easily about *beautiful* villages, embellished, perchance, with a "fulling-mill," "a handsome academy," or a meeting-house, and "a number of shops for the different mechanic arts;" where the green and white houses of the gentry, drawn up in rows, front on a street of which it would be difficult to tell whether it is most like a desert or a long stable-yard. Such spots can be beautiful only to the weary traveler, or the returning native, — or, perchance, the repentant misanthrope; not to him who, with unprejudiced senses, has just come out of the woods, and approaches one of them, by a bare road, through a succession of straggling homesteads where he cannot tell which is the almshouse. However, as for Sandwich, I cannot speak particularly. Ours was but half a Sandwich at most, and that must have fallen on the buttered side some time. I only saw that it was a closely-built town for a small one, with glass-works to improve its sand, and narrow streets in which we turned round and round till we could not tell which way we were going, and the rain came in, first on this side and then on that, and I saw that they in the houses were more comfortable than we in the coach. My book also said of this town, "The inhabitants, in general, are substantial livers," — that is, I suppose, they do not live like philosophers; but, as the stage did not stop long enough for us to dine, we had no opportunity to test the truth of this statement. It may have referred, however,

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to the quantity "of oil they would yield." It further said, "The inhabitants of Sandwich generally manifest a fond and steady adherence to the manners, employments and modes of living which characterized their fathers," which made me think that they were, after all, very much like all the rest of the world; — and it added that this was "a resemblance, which, at this day, will constitute no impeachment of either their virtue or taste;" which remark proves to me that the writer was one with the rest of them. No people ever lived by cursing their fathers, however great a curse their fathers might have been to them. But it must be confessed that ours was old authority, and probably they have changed all that now.

Our route was along the Bay side, through Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis, and Brewster, to Orleans, with a range of low hills on our right, running down the Cape. The weather was not favorable for wayside views, but we made the most of such glimpses of land and water as we could get through the rain. The country was, for the most part, bare, or with only a little scrubby wood left on the hills. We noticed in Yarmouth — and, if I do not mistake, in Dennis — large tracts where pitch pines were planted four or five years before. They were in rows, as they appeared when we were abreast of them, and, excepting that there were extensive vacant spaces, seemed to be doing remarkably well. This, we were told, was the only use to which such tracts could be profitably put. Every higher eminence had a pole set up on it, with an old storm-coat or sail tied to it, for a signal, that those on the south

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side of the Cape, for instance, might know when the Boston packets had arrived on the north. It appeared as if this use must absorb the greater part of the old clothes of the Cape, leaving but few rags for the peddlers. The windmills on the hills, — large weather-stained octagonal structures, — and the salt-works scattered all along the shore, with their long rows of vats resting on piles driven into the marsh, their low, turtle-like roofs, and their slighter windmills, were novel and interesting objects to an inlander. The sand by the roadside was partially covered with bunches of a moss-like plant, *Hudsonia tomentosa*, which a woman in the stage told us was called "poverty-grass," because it grew where nothing else would.

I was struck by the pleasant equality which reigned among the stage company, and their broad and invulnerable good humor. They were what is called free and easy, and met one another to advantage, as men who had, at length, learned how to live. They appeared to know each other when they were strangers, they were so simple and downright. They were well met, in an unusual sense, that is, they met as well as they could meet, and did not seem to be troubled with any impediment. They were not afraid nor ashamed of one another, but were contented to make just such a company as the ingredients allowed. It was evident that the same foolish respect was not here claimed for mere wealth and station that is in many parts of New England; yet some of them were the "first people," as they are called, of the various towns through which we passed. Retired sea-captains, in easy circumstances,

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who talked of farming as sea-captains are wont; an erect, respectable, and trustworthy-looking man, in his wrapper, some of the salt of the earth, who had formerly been the salt of the sea; or a more courtly gentleman, who, perchance, had been a representative to the General Court in his day; or a broad, red-faced Cape Cod man, who had seen too many storms to be easily irritated; or a fisherman's wife, who had been waiting a week for a coaster to leave Boston, and had at length come by the cars.

A strict regard for truth obliges us to say, that the few women whom we saw that day looked exceedingly pinched up. They had prominent chins and noses, having lost all their teeth, and a sharp *W* would represent their profile. They were not so well preserved as their husbands; or perchance they were well preserved as dried specimens. (Their husbands, however, were pickled.) But we respect them not the less for all that; our own dental system is far from perfect.

Still we kept on in the rain, or, if we stopped, it was commonly at a post-office, and we thought that writing letters, and sorting them against our arrival, must be the principal employment of the inhabitants of the Cape this rainy day. The post-office appeared a singularly domestic institution here. Ever and anon the stage stopped before some low shop or dwelling, and a wheelwright or shoemaker appeared in his shirt-sleeves and leather apron, with spectacles newly donned, holding up Uncle Sam's bag, as if it were a slice of home-made cake, for the travelers, while he retailed some piece of gossip to the driver,

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really as indifferent to the presence of the former as if they were so much baggage. In one instance, we understood that a woman was the post-mistress, and they said that she made the best one on the road; but we suspected that the letters must be subjected to a very close scrutiny there. While we were stopping, for this purpose, at Dennis, we ventured to put our heads out of the windows, to see where we were going, and saw rising before us, through the mist, singular barren hills, all stricken with poverty-grass, looming up as if they were in the horizon, though they were close to us, and we seemed to have got to the end of the land on that side, notwithstanding that the horses were still headed that way. Indeed, that part of Dennis which we saw was an exceedingly barren and desolate country, of a character which I can find no name for; such a surface, perhaps, as the bottom of the sea made dry land day before yesterday. It was covered with poverty-grass, and there was hardly a tree in sight, but here and there a little weather-stained, one-storied house, with a red roof, — for often the roof was painted, though the rest of the house was not, — standing bleak and cheerless, yet with a broad foundation to the land, where the comfort must have been all inside. Yet we read in the Gazetteer — for we carried that too with us — that, in 1837, one hundred and fifty masters of vessels, belonging to this town, sailed from the various ports of the Union. There must be many more houses in the south part of the town, else we cannot imagine where they all lodge when they are at home, if ever they are there; but the truth is, their houses are float-

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ing ones, and their home is on the ocean. There were almost no trees at all in this part of Dennis, nor could I learn that they talked of setting out any. It is true, there was a meeting-house, set round with Lombardy poplars, in a hollow square, the rows fully as straight as the studs of a building, and the corners as square; but, if I do not mistake, every one of them was dead. I could not help thinking that they needed a revival here. Our book said that, in 1795, there was erected in Dennis, "an elegant meeting-house, with a steeple." Perhaps this was the one; though whether it had a steeple, or had died down so far from sympathy with the poplars, I do not remember. Another meeting-house in this town was described as a "neat building;" but of the meeting-house in Chatham, a neighboring town, for there was then but one, nothing is said, except that it "is in good repair," — both which remarks, I trust, may be understood as applying to the churches spiritual as well as material. However, "elegant meeting-houses," from that Trinity one on Broadway, to this at Nobscusset, in my estimation, belong to the same category with "beautiful villages." I was never in season to see one. Handsome is that handsome does. What they did for shade here, in warm weather, we did not know, though we read that "fogs are more frequent in Chatham than in any other part of the country; and they serve in summer, instead of trees, to shelter the houses against the heat of the sun. To those who delight in extensive vision," — is it to be inferred that the inhabitants of Chatham do not? — "they are unpleasant, but they are not found to be

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Sunset, Chatham Harbor

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unhealthful." Probably, also, the unobstructed sea-breeze answers the purpose of a fan. The historian of Chatham says further, that "in many families there is no difference between the breakfast and supper; cheese, cakes, and pies being as common at the one as at the other." But that leaves us still uncertain whether they were really common at either.

The road, which was quite hilly, here ran near the Bay-shore, having the Bay on one side, and "the rough hill of Scargo," said to be the highest land on the Cape, on the other. Of the wide prospect of the Bay afforded by the summit of this hill, our guide says, "The view has not much of the beautiful in it, but it communicates a strong emotion of the sublime." That is the kind of communication which we love to have made to us. We passed through the village of Suet, in Dennis, on Suet and Quivet Necks, of which it is said, "when compared with Nobscusset," — we had a misty recollection of having passed through, or near to, the latter, — "it may be denominated a pleasant village; but, in comparison with the village of Sandwich, there is little or no beauty in it." However, we liked Dennis well, better than any town we had seen on the Cape, it was so novel, and, in that stormy day, so sublimely dreary.

Captain John Sears, of Suet, was the first person in this country who obtained pure marine salt by solar evaporation alone; though it had long been made in a similar way on the coast of France, and elsewhere. This was in the year 1776, at which time, on account of the war, salt was scarce and dear. The Historical

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Collections contain an interesting account of his experiments, which we read when we first saw the roofs of the salt-works. Barnstable County is the most favorable locality for these works on our northern coast, — there is so little fresh water here emptying into ocean. Quite recently there were about two millions of dollars invested in this business here. But now the Cape is unable to compete with the importers of salt and the manufacturers of it at the West, and, accordingly, her salt-works are fast going to decay. From making salt, they turn to fishing more than ever. The Gazetteer will uniformly tell you, under the head of each town, how many go a-fishing, and the value of the fish and oil taken, how much salt is made and used, how many are engaged in the coasting trade, how many in manufacturing palm-leaf hats, leather, boots, shoes, and tinware, and then it has done, and leaves you to imagine the more truly domestic manufactures which are nearly the same all the world over.

Late in the afternoon, we rode through Brewster, so named after Elder Brewster, for fear he would be forgotten else. Who has not heard of Elder Brewster? Who knows who he was? This appeared to be the modern-built town of the Cape, the favorite residence of retired sea-captains. It is said that "there are more masters and mates of vessels which sail on foreign voyages belonging to this place than to any other town in the country." There were many of the modern American houses here, such as they turn out at Cambridgeport, standing on the sand; you could almost swear that they had been floated down Charles River,

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and drifted across the bay. I call them American, because they are paid for by Americans, and "put up" by American carpenters; but they are little removed from lumber; only Eastern stuff disguised with white paint, the least interesting kind of driftwood to me. Perhaps we have reason to be proud of our naval architecture, and need not go to the Greeks, or the Goths, or the Italians, for the models of our vessels. Sea-captains do not employ a Cambridgeport carpenter to build their floating houses, and for their houses on shore, if they must copy any, it would be more agreeable to the imagination to see one of their vessels turned bottom upward, in the Numidian fashion. We read that, "at certain seasons, the reflection of the sun upon the windows of the houses in Wellfleet and Truro (across the inner side of the elbow of the Cape) is discernible with the naked eye, at a distance of eighteen miles and upward, on the county road." This we were pleased to imagine, as we had not seen the sun for twenty-four hours.

The same author (the Rev. John Simpkins) said of the inhabitants, a good while ago: "No persons appear to have a greater relish for the social circle and domestic pleasures. They are not in the habit of frequenting taverns, unless on public occasions. I know not of a proper idler or tavern-haunter in the place." This is more than can be said of my townsmen.

At length, we stopped for the night at Higgins's tavern, in Orleans, feeling very much as if we were on a sand-bar in the ocean, and not knowing whether we should see land or water ahead when the mist cleared

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away. We here overtook two Italian boys, who had waded thus far down the Cape through the sand, with their organs on their backs, and were going on to Provincetown. What a hard lot, we thought, if the Provincetown people should shut their doors against them! Whose yard would they go to next? Yet we concluded that they had chosen wisely to come here, where other music than that of the surf must be rare. Thus the great civilizer sends out his emissaries, sooner or later, to every sandy cape and lighthouse of the New World which the census-taker visits, and summons the savage there to surrender.

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III

THE PLAINS OF NAUSET

THE next morning, Thursday, October 11, it rained as hard as ever; but we were determined to proceed on foot, nevertheless. We first made some inquiries, with regard to the practicability of walking up the shore on the Atlantic side to Provincetown, whether we should meet with any creeks or marshes to trouble us. Higgins said that there was no obstruction, and that it was not much farther than by the road, but he thought that we should find it very "heavy" walking in the sand; it was bad enough in the road, a horse would sink in up to the fetlocks there. But there was one man at the tavern who had walked it, and he said that we could go very well, though it was sometimes inconvenient and even dangerous walking under the bank, when there was a great tide, with an easterly wind, which caused the sand to cave. For the first four or five miles we followed the road, which here turns to the north on the elbow, — the narrowest part of the Cape, — that we might clear an inlet from the ocean, a part of Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, on our right. We found the traveling good enough for walkers on the sides of the roads, though it was "heavy" for horses in the middle. We walked with our umbrellas behind us since it blowed hard as well as rained, with driving mists, as the day before, and the wind helped us over

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the sand at a rapid rate. Everything indicated that we had reached a strange shore. The road was a mere lane, winding over bare swells of bleak and barren-looking land. The houses were few and far between, besides being small and rusty, though they appeared to be kept in good repair, and their door-yards, which were the unfenced Cape, were tidy; or, rather, they looked as if the ground around them was blown clean by the wind. Perhaps the scarcity of wood here, and the consequent absence of the wood-pile and other wooden traps, had something to do with this appearance. They seemed, like mariners ashore, to have sat right down to enjoy the firmness of the land, without studying their postures or habiliments. To them it was merely *terra firma* and *cognita*, not yet *fertilis* and *jucunda*. Every landscape which is dreary enough has a certain beauty to my eyes, and in this instance its permanent qualities were enhanced by the weather. Everything told of the sea, even when we did not see its waste or hear its roar. For birds there were gulls, and for carts in the fields, boats turned bottom upward against the houses, and sometimes the rib of a whale was woven into the fence by the roadside. The trees were, if possible, rarer than the houses, excepting apple trees, of which there were a few small orchards in the hollows. These were either narrow and high, with flat tops, having lost their side branches, like huge plum bushes growing in exposed situations, or else dwarfed and branching immediately at the ground, like quince bushes. They suggested that, under like circumstances, all trees would at last acquire like habits of growth.

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I afterward saw on the Cape many full-grown apple trees not higher than a man's head; one whole orchard, indeed, where all the fruit could have been gathered by a man standing on the ground; but you could hardly creep beneath the trees. Some, which the owners told me were twenty years old, were only three and a half feet high, spreading at six inches from the ground five feet each way, and, being withal surrounded with boxes of tar to catch the canker-worms, they looked like plants in flower-pots, and as if they might be taken into the house in the winter. In another place, I saw some not much larger than currant bushes; yet the owner told me that they had borne a barrel and a half of apples that fall. If they had been placed close together, I could have cleared them all at a jump. I measured some near the Highland Light in Truro, which had been taken from the shrubby woods thereabouts when young, and grafted. One, which had been set ten years, was on an average eighteen inches high, and spread nine feet, with a flat top. It had borne one bushel of apples two years before. Another, probably twenty years old from the seed, was five feet high, and spread eighteen feet, branching, as usual, at the ground, so that you could not creep under it. This bore a barrel of apples two years before. The owner of these trees invariably used the personal pronoun in speaking of them; as, "I got *him* out of the woods, but *he* does n't bear." The largest that I saw in that neighborhood was nine feet high to the topmost leaf, and spread thirty-three feet, branching at the ground five ways.

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In one yard I observed a single very healthy-looking tree, while all the rest were dead or dying. The occupant said that his father had manured all but that one with blackfish.

This habit of growth should, no doubt, be encouraged, and they should not be trimmed up, as some traveling practitioners have advised. In 1802 there was not a single fruit tree in Chatham, the next town to Orleans, on the south; and the old account of Orleans says: "Fruit trees cannot be made to grow within a mile of the ocean. Even those which are placed at a greater distance are injured by the east winds; and after violent storms in the spring, a saltish taste is perceptible on their bark." We noticed that they were often covered with a yellow lichen like rust, the *Parmelia parietina*.

The most foreign and picturesque structures on the Cape, to an inlander, not excepting the salt-works, are the windmills, — gray-looking, octagonal towers, with long timbers slanting to the ground in the rear, and there resting on a cart-wheel, by which their fans are turned round to face the wind. These appeared also to serve in some measure for props against its force. A great circular rut was worn around the building by the wheel. The neighbors who assemble to turn the mill to the wind are likely to know which way it blows, without a weather-cock. They looked loose and slightly locomotive, like huge wounded birds, trailing a wing or a leg, and reminded one of pictures of the Netherlands. Being on elevated ground, and high in themselves, they serve as landmarks, — for there are no tall trees, or

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other objects commonly, which can be seen at a distance in the horizon; though the outline of the land itself is so firm and distinct, that an insignificant cone, or even precipice of sand, is visible at a great distance from over the sea. Sailors making the land commonly steer either by the windmills, or the meeting-houses. In the country, we are obliged to steer by the meeting-houses alone. Yet the meeting-house is a kind of windmill, which runs one day in seven, turned either by the winds of doctrine or public opinion, or more rarely by the winds of Heaven, where another sort of grist is ground, of which, if it be not all bran or musty, if it be not *plaster*, we trust to make bread of life.

There were, here and there, heaps of shells in the fields, where clams had been opened for bait; for Orleans is famous for its shell-fish, especially clams, or, as our author says, "to speak more properly, worms." The shores are more fertile than the dry land. The inhabitants measure their crops, not only by bushels of corn, but by barrels of clams. A thousand barrels of clam-bait are counted as equal in value to six or eight thousand bushels of Indian corn, and once they were procured without more labor or expense, and the supply was thought to be inexhaustible. "For," runs the history, "after a portion of the shore has been dug over, and almost all the clams taken up, at the end of two years, it is said, they are as plenty there as ever. It is even affirmed by many persons, that it is as necessary to stir the clam ground frequently, as it is to hoe a field of potatoes; because if this labor is omitted, the clams will be crowded too closely together, and will be pre-

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vented from increasing in size." But we were told that the small clam, *Mya arenaria*, was not so plenty here as formerly. Probably the clam-ground has been stirred too frequently, after all. Nevertheless, one man, who complained that they fed pigs with them and so made them scarce, told me that he dug and opened one hundred and twenty-six dollars' worth in one winter, in Truro.

We crossed a brook, not more than fourteen rods long, between Orleans and Eastham called Jeremiah's Gutter. The Atlantic is said sometimes to meet the Bay here, and isolate the northern part of the Cape. The streams of the Cape are necessarily formed on a minute scale since there is no room for them to run, without tumbling immediately into the sea; and beside, we found it difficult to run ourselves in that sand, when there was no want of room. Hence, the least channel where water runs, or may run, is important, and is dignified with a name. We read that there is no running water in Chatham, which is the next town. The barren aspect of the land would hardly be believed if described. It was such soil, or rather land, as, to judge from appearances, no farmer in the interior would think of cultivating, or even fencing. Generally, the plowed fields of the Cape look white and yellow, like a mixture of salt and Indian meal. This is called soil. All an inlander's notions of soil and fertility will be confounded by a visit to these parts, and he will not be able, for some time afterward, to distinguish soil from sand. The historian of Chatham says of a part of that town, which has been gained from the sea: "There is a doubtful

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appearance of a soil's beginning to be formed. It is styled *doubtful*, because it would not be observed by every eye, and perhaps not acknowledged by many." We thought that this would not be a bad description of the greater part of the Cape. There is a "beach" on the west side of Eastham, which we crossed the next summer, half a mile wide, and stretching across the township, containing seventeen hundred acres, on which there is not now a particle of vegetable mould, though it formerly produced wheat. All sands are here called "beaches," whether they are waves of water or of air that dash against them, since they commonly have their origin on the shore. "The sand in some places," says the historian of Eastham, "lodging against the beach grass, has been raised into hills fifty feet high, where twenty-five years ago no hills existed. In others it has filled up small valleys and swamps. Where a strong-rooted bush stood, the appearance is singular: a mass of earth and sand adheres to it, resembling a small tower. In several places rocks, which were formerly covered with soil, are disclosed; and being lashed by the sand, driven against them by the wind, look as if they were recently dug from a quarry."

We were surprised to hear of the great crops of corn which are still raised in Eastham, notwithstanding the real and apparent barrenness. Our landlord in Orleans had told us that he raised three or four hundred bushels of corn annually, and also of the great number of pigs which he fattened. In Champlain's "Voyages," there is a plate representing the Indian corn-fields hereabouts, with their wigwams in the midst, as they ap-

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peared in 1605, and it was here that the Pilgrims, to quote their own words, "bought eight or ten hogsheads of corn and beans" of the Nauset Indians, in 1622, to keep themselves from starving.[1] "In 1667 the town [of Eastham] voted that every housekeeper should kill twelve blackbirds, or three crows, which did great damage to the corn, and this vote was repeated for many years." In 1695 an additional order was passed, namely, that "every unmarried man in the township shall kill six blackbirds, or three crows, while he remains single; as a penalty for not doing it, shall not be married until he obey this order." The blackbirds, however, still molest the corn. I saw them at it the next summer, and there were many scarecrows, if not scare-blackbirds, in the fields, which I often mistook for men. From which I concluded, that either many men were not married, or many blackbirds were. Yet they put but three or four kernels in a hill, and let fewer plants remain than we do. In the account of Eastham, in the "Historical Collections," printed in 1802, it is said that "more corn is produced than the inhabitants consume, and above a thousand bushels are annually sent to mar-

[1] They touched after this at a place called Mattachiest, where they got more corn; but their shallop being cast away in a storm, the Governor was obliged to return to Plymouth on foot, fifty miles through the woods. According to Mourt's Relation, "he came safely home, though weary and *surbated*," that is, foot-sore. (Ital. *sobattere*, Lat. *sub* or *solea battere*, to bruise the soles of the feet; v. Dic. Not "from *acerbatus*, embittered or aggrieved," as one commentator on this passage supposes.) This word is of very rare occurrence, being applied only to governors and persons of like description, who are in that predicament; though such generally have considerable mileage allowed them, and might save their soles if they cared.

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ket. The soil being free from stones, a plough passes through it speedily; and after the corn has come up, a small Cape horse, somewhat larger than a goat, will, with the assistance of two boys, easily hoe three or four acres in a day. Several farmers are accustomed to produce five hundred bushels of grain annually, and not long since one raised eight hundred bushels on sixty acres." Similar accounts are given to-day; indeed, the recent accounts are in some instances suspectable repetitions of the old, and I have no doubt that their statements are as often founded on the exception as the rule, and that by far the greater number of acres are as barren as they appear to be. It is sufficiently remarkable that any crops can be raised here, and it may be owing, as others have suggested, to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, the warmth of the sand, and the rareness of frosts. A miller, who was sharpening his stones, told me that, forty years ago, he had been to a husking here, where five hundred bushels were husked in one evening, and the corn was piled six feet high or more, in the midst, but now fifteen or eighteen bushels to an acre were an average yield. I never saw fields of such puny and unpromising-looking corn, as in this town. Probably the inhabitants are contented with small crops from a great surface easily cultivated. It is not always the most fertile land that is the most profitable, and this sand may repay cultivation as well as the fertile bottoms of the West. It is said, moreover, that the vegetables raised in the sand, without manure, are remarkably sweet, the pumpkins especially, though when their seed is planted in the interior they soon degenerate.

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I can testify that the vegetables here, when they succeed at all, look remarkably green and healthy, though perhaps it is partly by contrast with the sand. Yet the inhabitants of the Cape towns, generally, do not raise their own meal or pork. Their gardens are commonly little patches that have been redeemed from the edges of the marshes and swamps.

All the morning we had heard the sea roar on the eastern shore, which was several miles distant; for it still felt the effects of the storm in which the St. John was wrecked, — though a school-boy, whom we overtook, hardly knew what we meant, his ears were so used to it. He would have more plainly heard the same sound in a shell. It was a very inspiriting sound to walk by, filling the whole air, that of the sea dashing against the land, heard several miles inland. Instead of having a dog to growl before your door, to have an Atlantic Ocean to growl for a whole Cape! On the whole, we were glad of the storm, which would show us the ocean in its angriest mood. Charles Darwin was assured that the roar of the surf on the coast of Chiloe, after a heavy gale, could be heard at night a distance of "21 sea miles across a hilly and wooded country." We conversed with the boy we have mentioned, who might have been eight years old, making him walk the while under the lee of our umbrella; for we thought it as important to know what was life on the Cape to a boy as to a man. We learned from him where the best grapes were to be found in that neighborhood. He was carrying his dinner in a pail; and, without any impertinent questions being put by us, it did at length appear of

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The Plains of Nauset

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what it consisted. The homeliest facts are always the most acceptable to an inquiring mind. At length, before we got to Eastham meeting-house, we left the road and struck across the country for the eastern shore at Nauset Lights, — three lights close together, two or three miles distant from us. They were so many that they might be distinguished from others; but this seemed a shiftless and costly way of accomplishing that object. We found ourselves at once on an apparently boundless plain, without a tree or a fence or, with one or two exceptions, a house in sight. Instead of fences, the earth was sometimes thrown up into a slight ridge. My companion compared it to the rolling prairies of Illinois. In the storm of wind and rain which raged when we traversed it, it no doubt appeared more vast and desolate than it really is. As there were no hills, but only here and there a dry hollow in the midst of the waste, and the distant horizon was concealed by mist, we did not know whether it was high or low. A solitary traveler whom we saw perambulating in the distance loomed like a giant. He appeared to walk slouchingly, as if held up from above by straps under his shoulders, as much as supported by the plain below. Men and boys would have appeared alike at a little distance, there being no object by which to measure them. Indeed, to an inlander, the Cape landscape is a constant mirage. This kind of country extended a mile or two each way. These were the "Plains of Nauset," once covered with wood, where in winter the winds howl and the snow blows right merrily in the face of the traveler. I was glad to have got out of the towns, where I am wont to

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feel unspeakably mean and disgraced, — to have left behind me for a season the bar-rooms of Massachusetts, where the full-grown are not weaned from savage and filthy habits, — still sucking a cigar. My spirits rose in proportion to the outward dreariness. The towns need to be ventilated. The gods would be pleased to see some pure flames from their altars. They are not to be appeased with cigar-smoke.

As we thus skirted the back side of the towns, — for we did not enter any village till we got to Provincetown, — we read their histories under our umbrellas, rarely meeting anybody. The old accounts are the richest in topography, which was what we wanted most; and, indeed, in most things else, for I find that the readable parts of the modern accounts of these towns consist, in a great measure, of quotations, acknowledged and unacknowledged, from the older ones, without any additional information of equal interest; — town histories, which at length run into a history of the Church of that place, that being the only story they have to tell, and conclude by quoting the Latin epitaphs of the old pastors, having been written in the good old days of Latin and of Greek. They will go back to the ordination of every minister, and tell you faithfully who made the introductory prayer, and who delivered the sermon; who made the ordaining prayer, and who gave the charge; who extended the right hand of fellowship, and who pronounced the benediction; also how many ecclesiastical councils convened from time to time to inquire into the orthodoxy of some minister, and the names of all who composed them. As it will take us an hour to

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get over this plain, and there is no variety in the prospect, peculiar as it is, I will read a little in the history of Eastham the while.

When the committee from Plymouth had purchased the territory of Eastham of the Indians, "it was demanded, who laid claim to Billingsgate?" which was understood to be all that part of the Cape north of what they had purchased. "The answer was, there was not any who owned it. 'Then,' said the committee, 'that land is ours.' The Indians answered, that it was." This was a remarkable assertion and admission. The Pilgrims appear to have regarded themselves as Not Any's representatives. Perhaps this was the first instance of that quiet way of "speaking for" a place not yet occupied, or at least not improved as much as it may be, which their descendants have practiced, and are still practicing so extensively. Not Any seems to have been the sole proprietor of all America before the Yankees. But history says, that when the Pilgrims had held the lands of Billingsgate many years, at length, "appeared an Indian, who styled himself Lieutenant Anthony," who laid claim to them, and of him they bought them. Who knows but a Lieutenant Anthony may be knocking at the door of the White House some day? At any rate, I know that if you hold a thing unjustly, there will surely be the devil to pay at last.

Thomas Prince, who was several times the governor of the Plymouth colony, was the leader of the settlement of Eastham. There was recently standing, on what was once his farm, in this town, a pear tree which is said to have been brought from England, and planted

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there by him, about two hundred years ago. It was blown down a few months before we were there. A late account says that it was recently in a vigorous state; the fruit small, but excellent; and it yielded on an average fifteen bushels. Some appropriate lines have been addressed to it, by a Mr. Heman Doane, from which I will quote, partly because they are the only specimen of Cape Cod verse which I remember to have seen, and partly because they are not bad.

"Two hundred years have, on the wings of Time,
Passed with their joys and woes, since thou, Old Tree!
Put forth thy first leaves in this foreign clime,
Transplanted from the soil beyond the sea.
* * * * * * * * *

[These stars represent the more clerical lines, and also those which have deceased.]

"That exiled band long since have passed away,
And still, old Tree! thou standest in the place
Where Prince's hand did plant thee in his day, —
An undesigned memorial of his race
And time; of those our honored fathers, when
They came from Plymouth o'er and settled here;
Doane, Higgins, Snow, and other worthy men,
Whose names their sons remember to revere.
* * * * * * * * *
"Old Time has thinned thy boughs, Old Pilgrim Tree!
And bowed thee with the weight of many years;
Yet, 'mid the frosts of age, thy bloom we see,
And yearly still thy mellow fruit appears."

There are some other lines which I might quote, if they were not tied to unworthy companions, by the rhyme. When one ox will lie down, the yoke bears hard on him that stands up.

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One of the first settlers of Eastham was Deacon John Doane, who died in 1707, aged one hundred and ten. Tradition says that he was rocked in a cradle several of his last years. That, certainly, was not an Achillean life. His mother must have let him slip when she dipped him into the liquor which was to make him invulnerable, and he went in, heels and all. Some of the stone bounds to his farm, which he set up, are standing to-day, with his initials cut in them.

The ecclesiastical history of this town interested us somewhat. It appears that "they very early built a small meeting-house, twenty feet square, with a thatched roof through which they might fire their muskets," — of course, at the Devil. "In 1662, the town agreed that a part of every whale cast on shore be appropriated for the support of the ministry." No doubt there seemed to be some propriety in thus leaving the support of the ministers to Providence, whose servants they are, and who alone rules the storms; for, when few whales were cast up, they might suspect that their worship was not acceptable. The ministers must have sat upon the cliffs in every storm, and watched the shore with anxiety. And, for my part, if I were a minister, I would rather trust to the bowels of the billows, on the back side of Cape Cod, to cast up a whale for me, than to the generosity of many a country parish that I know. You cannot say of a country minister's salary, commonly, that it is "very like a whale." Nevertheless, the minister who depended on whales cast up must have had a trying time of it. I would rather have gone to the Falkland Isles with a harpoon, and done with it. Think of

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a whale having the breath of life beaten out of him by a storm, and dragging in over the bars and guzzles, for the support of the ministry! What a consolation it must have been to him! I have heard of a minister, who had been a fisherman, being settled in Bridgewater for as long a time as he could tell a cod from a haddock. Generous as it seems, this condition would empty most country pulpits forthwith, for it is long since the fishers of men were fishermen. Also, a duty was put on mackerel here to support a free school; in other words, the mackerel school was taxed in order that the children's school might be free. "In 1665 the Court passed a law to inflict corporal punishment on all persons, who resided in the towns of this government, who denied the Scriptures." Think of a man being whipped on a spring morning, till he was constrained to confess that the Scriptures were true! "It was also voted by the town, that all persons who should stand out of the meeting-house during the time of divine service should be set in the stocks." It behooved such a town to see that sitting in the meeting-house was nothing akin to sitting in the stocks, lest the penalty of obedience to the law might be greater than that of disobedience. This was the Eastham famous of late years for its camp-meetings, held in a grove near by, to which thousands flock from all parts of the Bay. We conjectured that the reason for the perhaps unusual, if not unhealthful development of the religious sentiment here, was the fact that a large portion of the population are women whose husbands and sons are either abroad on the sea, or else drowned, and there is nobody but they and the ministers left

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behind. The old account says that "hysteric fits are very common in Orleans, Eastham, and the towns below, particularly on Sunday, in the time of divine service. When one woman is affected, five or six others generally sympathize with her; and the congregation is thrown into the utmost confusion. Several old men suppose, unphilosophically and uncharitably perhaps, that the will is partly concerned, and that ridicule and threats would have a tendency to prevent the evil." How this is now we did not learn. We saw one singularly masculine woman, however, in a house on this very plain, who did not look as if she was ever troubled with hysterics, or sympathized with those that were; or, perchance, life itself was to her a hysteric fit, — a Nauset woman, of a hardness and coarseness such as no man ever possesses or suggests. It was enough to see the vertebræ and sinews of her neck, and her set jaws of iron, which would have bitten a board-nail in two in their ordinary action, — braced against the world, talking like a man-of-war's-man in petticoats, or as if shouting to you through a breaker; who looked as if it made her head ache to live; hard enough for any enormity. I looked upon her as one who had committed infanticide; who never had a brother, unless it were some wee thing that died in infancy, — for what need of him? — and whose father must have died before she was born. This woman told us that the camp-meetings were not held the previous summer for fear of introducing the cholera, and that they would have been held earlier this summer, but the rye was so backward that straw would not have been ready for them; for they lie

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in straw. There are sometimes one hundred and fifty ministers (!) and five thousand hearers, assembled. The ground, which is called Millennium Grove, is owned by a company in Boston, and is the most suitable, or rather unsuitable, for this purpose of any that I saw on the Cape. It is fenced, and the frames of the tents are at all times to be seen interspersed among the oaks. They have an oven and a pump, and keep all their kitchen utensils and tent-coverings and furniture in a permanent building on the spot. They select a time for their meetings when the moon is full. A man is appointed to clear out the pump a week beforehand, while the ministers are clearing their throats; but probably the latter do not always deliver as pure a stream as the former. I saw the heaps of clamshells left under the tables, where they had feasted in previous summers, and supposed, of course, that that was the work of the unconverted, or the backsliders and scoffers. It looked as if a camp-meeting must be a singular combination of a prayer-meeting and a picnic.

The first minister settled here was the Rev. Samuel Treat, in 1672, a gentleman who is said to be "entitled to a distinguished rank among the evangelists of New England." He converted many Indians, as well as white men, in his day, and translated the Confession of Faith into the Nauset language. These were the Indians concerning whom their first teacher, Richard Bourne, wrote to Gookin, in 1674, that he had been to see one who was sick, "and there came from him very savory and heavenly expressions," but, with regard to the mass of them, he says, "the truth is, that many of

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them are very loose in their course, to my heart-breaking sorrow." Mr. Treat is described as a Calvinist of the strictest kind, not one of those who, by giving up or explaining away, become like a porcupine disarmed of its quills, but a consistent Calvinist, who can dart his quills to a distance and courageously defend himself. There exists a volume of his sermons in manuscript, which, says a commentator, "appear to have been designed for publication." I quote the following sentences at second-hand, from a Discourse on Luke xvi. 23, addressed to sinners:—

"Thou must ere long go to the bottomless pit. Hell hath enlarged herself, and is ready to receive thee. There is room enough for thy entertainment. . . .

"Consider thou art going to a place prepared by God on purpose to exalt his justice in; a place made for no other employment but torments. Hell is God's house of correction; and remember God doth all things like himself: When God would show his justice, and what is the weight of his wrath, he makes a hell, where it shall indeed appear to purpose. . . . Woe to thy soul when thou shalt be set up as a butt for the arrows of the Almighty. . . .

"Consider, God himself shall be the principal agent in thy misery. . . . His breath is the bellows which blows up the flame of hell forever: . . . and if he punish thee, if he meet thee in his fury, he will not meet thee as a man; he will give thee an omnipotent blow."

"Some think sinning ends with this life; but it is a mistake. The creature is held under an everlasting law; the damned increase in sin in hell. Possibly the

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mention of this may please thee. But remember there shall be no pleasant sins there; no eating, drinking, singing, dancing, wanton dalliance, and drinking stolen waters; but damned sins, bitter hellish sins, sins exasperated by torments, cursing God, spite, rage, and blasphemy. . . . The guilt of all thy sins shall be laid upon thy soul, and be made so many heaps of fuel. . . .

"Sinner, I beseech thee, realize the truth of these things. Do not go about to dream that this is derogatory to God's mercy, and nothing but a vain fable to scare children out of their wits withal. God can be merciful, though he make thee miserable. He shall have monuments enough of that precious attribute, shining like stars in the place of glory, and singing eternal hallelujahs to the praise of Him that redeemed them, though, to exalt the power of his justice, he damn sinners heaps upon heaps."

"But," continues the same writer, "with the advantage of proclaiming the doctrine of terror, which is naturally productive of a sublime and impressive style of eloquence ('Triumphat ventoso gloriae curru orator, qui pectus angit, irritat, et implet terroribus.' Vid. Burnet, De Stat. Mort., p. 309), he could not attain the character of a popular preacher. His voice was so loud, that . . . it could be heard at a great distance from the meeting-house, even amidst the shrieks of hysterical women, and the winds that howled over the plains of Nauset; but there was no more music in it than in the discordant sounds with which it was mingled."

"The effect of his preaching," it is said, "was that his hearers were several times, in the course of

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his ministry, awakened and alarmed;" and on one occasion a comparatively innocent young man was frightened nearly out of his wits, and Mr. Treat had to exert himself to make hell seem somewhat cooler to him; yet we are assured that Treat's "manners were cheerful, his conversation pleasant, and sometimes facetious, but always decent. He was fond of a stroke of humor and a practical joke, and manifested his relish for them by long and loud fits of laughter."

This was the man of whom a well-known anecdote is told, which doubtless many of my readers have heard, but which, nevertheless, I will venture to quote: —

"After his marriage with the daughter of Mr. Willard [pastor of the South Church in Boston], he was sometimes invited by that gentleman to preach in his pulpit. Mr. Willard possessed a graceful delivery, a masculine and harmonious voice; and, though he did not gain much reputation by his 'Body of Divinity,' which is frequently sneered at, particularly by those who have not read it, yet in his sermons are strength of thought and energy of language. The natural consequence was that he was generally admired. Mr. Treat, having preached one of his best discourses to the congregation of his father-in-law, in his usual unhappy manner, excited universal disgust; and several nice judges waited on Mr. Willard, and begged that Mr. Treat, who was a worthy, pious man, it was true, but a wretched preacher, might never be invited into his pulpit again. To this request Mr. Willard made no reply; but he desired his son-in-law to lend him the discourse; which being left with him, he delivered it

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without alteration to his people a few weeks after. . . . They flew to Mr. Willard and requested a copy for the press. 'See the difference,' they cried, 'between yourself and your son-in-law; you have preached a sermon on the same text as Mr. Treat's, but whilst his was contemptible, yours is excellent.'" As is observed in a note, "Mr. Willard, after producing the sermon in the handwriting of Mr. Treat, might have addressed these sage critics in the words of Phædrus, —

'En hic declarat, quales sitis judices.'" [1]

Mr. Treat died of a stroke of the palsy, just after the memorable storm known as the Great Snow, which left the ground around his house entirely bare, but heaped up the snow in the road to an uncommon height. Through this an arched way was dug, by which the Indians bore his body to the grave.

The reader will imagine us, all the while, steadily traversing that extensive plain in a direction a little north of east toward Nauset Beach, and reading under our umbrellas as we sailed, while it blowed hard with mingled mist and rain, as if we were approaching a fit anniversary of Mr. Treat's funeral. We fancied that it was such a moor as that on which somebody perished in the snow, as is related in the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life."

The next minister settled here was the "Rev. Samuel Osborn, who was born in Ireland, and educated at the University of Dublin." He is said to have been "a man of wisdom and virtue," and taught his people

[1] Lib. v. Fab. 5.

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the use of peat, and the art of drying and preparing it, which, as they had scarcely any other fuel, was a great blessing to them. He also introduced improvements in agriculture. But, notwithstanding his many services, as he embraced the religion of Arminius, some of his flock became dissatisfied. At length, an ecclesiastical council consisting of ten ministers with their churches sat upon him, and they, naturally enough, spoiled his usefulness. The council convened at the desire of two divine philosophers, Joseph Doane and Nathaniel Freeman.

In their report they say, "It appears to the council that the Rev. Mr. Osborn hath, in his preaching to this people, said, that what Christ did and suffered doth nothing abate or diminish our obligation to obey the law of God, and that Christ's suffering and obedience were for himself; both parts of which, we think, contain dangerous error."

"Also: 'It hath been said, and doth appear to this council, that the Rev. Mr. Osborn, both in public and in private, asserted that there are no promises in the Bible but what are conditional, which we think, also, to be an error, and do say that there are promises which are absolute and without any condition, — such as the promise of a new heart, and that he will write his law in our hearts.'"

"Also, they say, 'it hath been alleged, and doth appear to us, that Mr. Osborn hath declared, that *obedience* is a considerable *cause* of a person's justification, which, we think, contains very dangerous error.'"

And many the like distinctions they made, such as

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some of my readers, probably, are more familiar with than I am. So, far in the East, among the Yezidis, or Worshipers of the Devil, so-called, the Chaldæans, and others, according to the testimony of travelers, you may still hear these remarkable disputations on doctrinal points going on. Osborn was, accordingly, dismissed, and he removed to Boston, where he kept school for many years. But he was fully justified, methinks, by his works in the peat meadow; one proof of which is, that he lived to be between ninety and one hundred years old.

The next minister was the Rev. Benjamin Webb, of whom, though a neighboring clergyman pronounced him "the best man and the best minister whom he ever knew," yet the historian says, that, —

"As he spent his days in the uniform discharge of his duty [it reminds one of a country muster] and there were no shades to give relief to his character, not much can be said of him. [Pity the Devil did not plant a few shade-trees along his avenues.] His heart was as pure as the new-fallen snow, which completely covers every dark spot in a field; his mind was as serēne as the sky in a mild evening of June, when the full moon shines without a cloud. Name any virtue, and that virtue he practiced; name any vice, and that vice he shunned. But if peculiar qualities marked his character, they were his humility, his gentleness, and his love of God. The people had long been taught by a son of thunder [Mr. Treat]; in him they were instructed by a son of consolation, who sweetly allured them to virtue by soft persuasion, and by exhibiting the mercy of the Supreme Being;

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for his thoughts were so much in heaven, that they seldom descended to the dismal regions below; and though of the same religious sentiments as Mr. Treat, yet his attention was turned to those glad tidings of great joy which a Saviour came to publish."

We were interested to hear that such a man had trodden the plains of Nauset.

Turning over further in our book, our eyes fell on the name of the Rev. Jonathan Bascom of Orleans: "Senex emunctae naris, doctus, et auctor elegantium verborum; facetus, et dulcis festique sermonis." And, again, on that of the Rev. Nathan Stone, of Dennis: "Vir humilis, mitis, blandus, advenarum hospes; [there was need of him there;] suis commodis in terrâ non studens, reconditis thesauris in coelo." An easy virtue that, there, for methinks no inhabitant of Dennis could be very studious about his earthly commodity, but must regard the bulk of his treasures as in heaven. But probably the most just and pertinent character of all is that which appears to be given to the Rev. Ephraim Briggs, of Chatham, in the language of the later Romans, "*Seip, sepoese, sepoemese, wechekum*," — which not being interpreted, we know not what it means, though we have no doubt it occurs somewhere in the Scriptures, probably in the Apostle Eliot's Epistle to the Nipmucks.

Let no one think that I do not love the old ministers. They were, probably, the best men of their generation, and they deserve that their biographies should fill the pages of the town histories. If I could but hear the "glad tidings" of which they tell, and which, per-

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chance, they heard, I might write in a worthier strain than this.

There was no better way to make the reader realize how wide and peculiar that plain was, and how long it took to traverse it, than by inserting these extracts in the midst of my narrative.

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IV

THE BEACH

At length we reached the seemingly retreating boundary of the plain, and entered what had appeared at a distance an upland marsh, but proved to be dry sand covered with beach grass, the bearberry, bayberry, shrub oaks, and beach plum, slightly ascending as we approached the shore; then, crossing over a belt of sand on which nothing grew, though the roar of the sea sounded scarcely louder than before, and we were prepared to go half a mile farther, we suddenly stood on the edge of a bluff overlooking the Atlantic. Far below us was the beach, from half a dozen to a dozen rods in width, with a long line of breakers rushing to the strand. The sea was exceedingly dark and stormy, the sky completely overcast, the clouds still dropping rain, and the wind seemed to blow not so much as the exciting cause, as from sympathy with the already agitated ocean. The waves broke on the bars at some distance from the shore, and curving green or yellow as if over so many unseen dams, ten or twelve feet high, like a thousand waterfalls, rolled in foam to the sand. There was nothing but that savage ocean between us and Europe.

Having got down the bank, and as close to the water as we could, where the sand was the hardest, leaving the Nauset Lights behind us, we began to walk leisurely

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up the beach, in a northwest direction, toward Provincetown, which was about twenty-five miles distant, still sailing under our umbrellas with a strong aft wind, admiring in silence, as we walked, the great force of the ocean stream,—

ποταμοῖο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο.

The white breakers were rushing to the shore; the foam ran up the sand, and then ran back, as far as we could see (and we imagined how much farther along the Atlantic coast, before and behind us), as regularly, to compare great things with small, as the master of a choir beats time with his white wand; and ever and anon a higher wave caused us hastily to deviate from our path, and we looked back on our tracks filled with water and foam. The breakers looked like droves of a thousand wild horses of Neptune, rushing to the shore, with their white manes streaming far behind; and when, at length, the sun shone for a moment, their manes were rainbow-tinted. Also, the long kelp-weed was tossed up from time to time, like the tails of sea-cows sporting in the brine.

There was not a sail in sight, and we saw none that day, for they had all sought harbors in the late storm, and had not been able to get out again; and the only human beings whom we saw on the beach for several days were one or two wreckers looking for driftwood and fragments of wrecked vessels. After an easterly storm in the spring, this beach is sometimes strewn with Eastern wood from one end to the other, which, as it belongs to him who saves it, and the Cape is nearly

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destitute of wood, is a godsend to the inhabitants. We soon met one of these wreckers, — a regular Cape Cod man, with whom we parleyed, with a bleached and weather-beaten face, within whose wrinkles I distinguished no particular feature. It was like an old sail endowed with life, — a hanging-cliff of weather-beaten flesh, — like one of the clay boulders which occurred in that sand-bank. He had on a hat which had seen salt water, and a coat of many pieces and colors, though it was mainly the color of the beach, as if it had been sanded. His variegated back — for his coat had many patches, even between the shoulders — was a rich study to us when we had passed him and looked round. It might have been dishonorable for him to have so many scars behind, it is true, if he had not had many more and more serious ones in front. He looked as if he sometimes saw a doughnut, but never descended to comfort; too grave to laugh, too tough to cry; as indifferent as a clam, — like a sea-clam with hat on and legs, that was out walking the strand. He may have been one of the Pilgrims, — Peregrine White, at least, — who has kept on the back side of the Cape, and let the centuries go by. He was looking for wrecks, old logs, water-logged and covered with barnacles, or bits of boards and joists, even chips which he drew out of the reach of the tide, and stacked up to dry. When the log was too large to carry far, he cut it up where the last wave had left it, or rolling it a few feet, appropriated it by sticking two sticks into the ground crosswise above it. Some rotten trunk, which in Maine cumbers the ground, and is, perchance, thrown into the water on

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purpose, is here thus carefully picked up, split and dried, and husbanded. Before winter the wrecker painfully carries these things up the bank on his shoulders by a long diagonal slanting path made with a hoe in the sand, if there is no hollow at hand. You may see his hooked pike-staff always lying on the bank, ready for use. He is the true monarch of the beach, whose "right there is none to dispute," and he is as much identified with it as a beach-bird.

Crantz, in his account of Greenland, quotes Dalagen's relation of the ways and usages of the Greenlanders, and says, "Whoever finds drift-wood, or the spoils of a shipwreck on the strand, enjoys it as his own, though he does not live there. But he must haul it ashore and lay a stone upon it, as a token that some one has taken possession of it, and this stone is the deed of security, for no other Greenlander will offer to meddle with it afterwards." Such is the instinctive law of nations. We have also this account of driftwood in Crantz: "As he (the Founder of Nature) has denied this frigid rocky region the growth of trees, he has bid the streams of the Ocean to convey to its shores a great deal of wood, which accordingly comes floating thither, part without ice, but the most part along with it, and lodges itself between the islands. Were it not for this, we Europeans should have no wood to burn there, and the poor Greenlanders (who, it is true, do not use wood, but train, for burning) would, however, have no wood to roof their houses, to erect their tents, as also to build their boats, and to shaft their arrows, (yet there *grew* some small but crooked alders, etc.,) by which they

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must procure their maintenance, clothing and train for warmth, light, and cooking. Among this wood are great trees torn up by the roots, which, by driving up and down for many years and rubbing on the ice, are quite bare of branches and bark, and corroded with great wood-worms. A small part of this drift-wood are willows, alder and birch trees, which come out of the bays in the south (*i. e.*, of Greenland); also large trunks of aspen-trees, which must come from a greater distance; but the greatest part is pine and fir. We find also a good deal of a sort of wood finely veined, with few branches; this I fancy is larch-wood, which likes to decorate the sides of lofty, stony mountains. There is also a solid, reddish wood, of a more agreeable fragrance than the common fir, with visible cross-veins; which I take to be the same species as the beautiful silver-firs, or *zirbel*, that have the smell of cedar, and grow on the high Grison hills, and the Switzers wainscot their rooms with them." The wrecker directed us to a slight depression, called Snow's Hollow, by which we ascended the bank, for elsewhere, if not difficult, it was inconvenient to climb it on account of the sliding sand which filled our shoes.

This sand-bank — the backbone of the Cape — rose directly from the beach to the height of a hundred feet or more above the ocean. It was with singular emotions that we first stood upon it and discovered what a place we had chosen to walk on. On our right, beneath us, was the beach of smooth and gently-sloping sand, a dozen rods in width; next, the endless series of white breakers; further still, the light green water

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over the bar, which runs the whole length of the forearm of the Cape, and beyond this stretched the unwearied and illimitable ocean. On our left, extending back from the very edge of the bank, was a perfect desert of shining sand, from thirty to eighty rods in width, skirted in the distance by small sand-hills fifteen or twenty feet high; between which, however, in some places, the sand penetrated as much farther. Next commenced the region of vegetation, — a succession of small hills and valleys covered with shrubbery, now glowing with the brightest imaginable autumnal tints; and beyond this were seen, here and there, the waters of the bay. Here, in Wellfleet, this pure sand plateau, known to sailors as the Table-Lands of Eastham, on account of its appearance, as seen from the ocean, and because it once made a part of that town, — full fifty rods in width, and in many places much more, and sometimes full one hundred and fifty feet above the ocean, — stretched away northward from the southern boundary of the town, without a particle of vegetation, — as level almost as a table, — for two and a half or three miles, or as far as the eye could reach; slightly rising towards the ocean, then stooping to the beach, by as steep a slope as sand could lie on, and as regular as a military engineer could desire. It was like the escarped rampart of a stupendous fortress, whose glacis was the beach, and whose champaign the ocean. From its surface we overlooked the greater part of the Cape. In short, we were traversing a desert, with the view of an autumnal landscape of extraordinary brilliancy, a sort of Promised Land, on the one hand, and

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Beach Bluffs, Wellfleet Shore

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the ocean on the other. Yet, though the prospect was so extensive, and the country for the most part destitute of trees, a house was rarely visible, — we never saw one from the beach, — and the solitude was that of the ocean and the desert combined. A thousand men could not have seriously interrupted it, but would have been lost in the vastness of the scenery as their footsteps in the sand.

The whole coast is so free from rocks, that we saw but one or two for more than twenty miles. The sand was soft like the beach, and trying to the eyes when the sun shone. A few piles of driftwood, which some wreckers had painfully brought up the bank and stacked up there to dry, being the only objects in the desert, looked indefinitely large and distant, even like wigwams, though, when we stood near them, they proved to be insignificant little "jags" of wood.

For sixteen miles, commencing at the Nauset Lights, the bank held its height, though farther north it was not so level as here, but interrupted by slight hollows, and the patches of beach-grass and bayberry frequently crept into the sand to its edge. There are some pages entitled "A Description of the Eastern Coast of the County of Barnstable," printed in 1802, pointing out the spots on which the Trustees of the Humane Society have erected huts called Charity or Humane Houses, "and other places where shipwrecked seamen may look for shelter." Two thousand copies of this were dispersed, that every vessel which frequented this coast might be provided with one. I have read this Shipwrecked Seaman's Manual with a melancholy kind of

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interest, for the sound of the surf, or, you might say, the moaning of the sea, is heard all through it, as if its author were the sole survivor of a shipwreck himself. Of this part of the coast he says: "This highland approaches the ocean with steep and lofty banks, which it is extremely difficult to climb, especially in a storm. In violent tempests, during very high tides, the sea breaks against the foot of them, rendering it then unsafe to walk on the strand which lies between them and the ocean. Should the seaman succeed in his attempt to ascend them, he must forbear to penetrate into the country, as houses are generally so remote that they would escape his research during the night; he must pass on to the valleys by which the banks are intersected. These valleys, which the inhabitants call Hollows, run at right angles with the shore, and in the middle or lowest part of them a road leads from the dwelling-houses to the sea." By the word *road* must not always be understood a visible cart-track.

There were these two roads for us, — an upper and a lower one, — the bank and the beach; both stretching twenty-eight miles northwest, from Nauset Harbor to Race Point, without a single opening into the beach, and with hardly a serious interruption of the desert. If you were to ford the narrow and shallow inlet at Nauset Harbor, where there is not more than eight feet of water on the bar at full sea, you might walk ten or twelve miles farther, which would make a beach forty miles long, — and the bank and beach, on the east side of Nantucket, are but a continuation of these. I was comparatively satisfied. There I had got the Cape

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under me, as much as if I were riding it barebacked. It was not as on the map, or seen from the stage-coach; but there I found it all out of doors, huge and real, Cape Cod! as it cannot be represented on a map, color it as you will; the thing itself, than which there is nothing more like it, no truer picture or account; which you cannot go farther and see. I cannot remember what I thought before that it was. They commonly celebrate those beaches only which have a hotel on them, not those which have a humane house alone. But I wished to see that seashore where man's works are wrecks; to put up at the true Atlantic House, where the ocean is land-lord as well as sea-lord, and comes ashore without a wharf for the landing; where the crumbling land is the only invalid, or at best is but dry land, and that is all you can say of it.

We walked on quite at our leisure, now on the beach, now on the bank, sitting from time to time on some damp log, maple or yellow birch, which had long followed the seas, but had now at last settled on land; or under the lee of a sand-hill, on the bank, that we might gaze steadily on the ocean. The bank was so steep, that, where there was no danger of its caving, we sat on its edge as on a bench. It was difficult for us landsmen to look out over the ocean without imagining land in the horizon; yet the clouds appeared to hang low over it, and rest on the water as they never do on the land, perhaps on account of the great distance to which we saw. The sand was not without advantage, for, though it was "heavy" walking in it, it was soft to the feet; and, notwithstanding that it had been raining

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nearly two days, when it held up for half an hour, the sides of the sand-hills, which were porous and sliding, afforded a dry seat. All the aspects of this desert are beautiful, whether you behold it in fair weather or foul, or when the sun is just breaking out after a storm, and shining on its moist surface in the distance, it is so white, and pure, and level, and each slight inequality and track is so distinctly revealed; and when your eyes slide off this, they fall on the ocean. In summer the mackerel gulls — which here have their nests among the neighboring sand-hills — pursue the traveler anxiously, now and then diving close to his head with a squeak, and he may see them, like swallows, chase some crow which has been feeding on the beach, almost across the Cape.

Though for some time I have not spoken of the roaring of the breakers, and the ceaseless flux and reflux of the waves, yet they did not for a moment cease to dash and roar, with such a tumult that, if you had been there, you could scarcely have heard my voice the while; and they are dashing and roaring this very moment, — though it may be with less din and violence, — for there the sea never rests. We were wholly absorbed by this spectacle and tumult, and like Chryses, though in a different mood from him, we walked silent along the shore of the resounding sea.

Βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.[1]

[1] We have no word in English to express the sound of many waves dashing at once, whether gently or violently πολυφλοίσβοιος to the ear, and, in the ocean's gentle moods, an ἀνάριθμον γελασμα to the eye.

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I put in a little Greek now and then, partly because it sounds so much like the ocean, — though I doubt if Homer's *Mediterranean* Sea ever sounded so loud as this.

The attention of those who frequent the camp-meetings at Eastham is said to be divided between the preaching of the Methodists and the preaching of the billows on the back side of the Cape, for they all stream over here in the course of their stay. I trust that in this case the loudest voice carries it. With what effect may we suppose the ocean to say, "My hearers!" to the multitude on the bank! On that side some John N. Maffit; on this, the Reverend Poluphloisboios Thalassa.

There was but little weed cast up here, and that kelp chiefly, there being scarcely a rock for rockweed to adhere to. Who has not had a vision from some vessel's deck, when he had still his land legs on, of this great brown apron, drifting half upright, and quite submerged through the green water, clasping a stone or a deep-sea mussel in its unearthly fingers? I have seen it carrying a stone half as large as my head. We sometimes watched a mass of this cable-like weed, as it was tossed up on the crest of a breaker, waiting with interest to see it come in, as if there was some treasure buoyed up by it; but we were always surprised and disappointed at the insignificance of the mass which had attracted us. As we looked out over the water, the smallest objects floating on it appeared indefinitely large, we were so impressed by the vastness of the ocean, and each one bore so large a proportion to the

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whole ocean, which we saw. We were so often disappointed in the size of such things as came ashore, the ridiculous bits of wood or weed with which the ocean labored, that we began to doubt whether the Atlantic itself would bear a still closer inspection, and would not turn out to be but a small pond, if it should come ashore to us. This kelp, oar-weed, tangle, devil's-apron, sole-leather, or ribbon-weed, — as various species are called, — appeared to us a singularly marine and fabulous product, a fit invention for Neptune to adorn his car with, or a freak of Proteus. All that is told of the sea has a fabulous sound to an inhabitant of the land, and all its products have a certain fabulous quality, as if they belonged to another planet, from seaweed to a sailor's yarn, or a fish story. In this element the animal and vegetable kingdoms meet and are strangely mingled. One species of kelp, according to Bory St. Vincent, has a stem fifteen hundred feet long, and hence is the longest vegetable known, and a brig's crew spent two days to no purpose collecting the trunks of another kind cast ashore on the Falkland Islands, mistaking it for driftwood.[1] This species looked almost edible; at least, I thought that if I were starving, I would try it. One sailor told me that the cows ate it. It cut like cheese; for I took the earliest opportunity to sit down and deliberately whittle up a fathom or two of it, that I might become more intimately acquainted with it, see how it cut, and if it were hollow all the way through. The blade looked like a broad belt, whose edges had been quilled, or as if stretched

[1] See Harvey on *Algæ*.

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by hammering, and it was also twisted spirally. The extremity was generally worn and ragged from the lashing of the waves. A piece of the stem which I carried home shrunk to one quarter of its size a week afterward, and was completely covered with crystals of salt like frost. The reader will excuse my greenness, — though it is not sea-greenness, like his, perchance, — for I live by a river shore, where this weed does not wash up. When we consider in what meadows it grew, and how it was raked, and in what kind of hay weather got in or out, we may well be curious about it. One who is weather-wise has given the following account of the matter: —

"When descends on the Atlantic
The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with seaweed from the rocks:

"From Bermuda's reefs; from edges
Of sunken ledges,
In some far-off, bright Azore;
From Bahama, and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

"From the tumbling surf, that buries
The Orkneyan Skerries,
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks of ships, and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate rainy seas; —

"Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main."

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But he was not thinking of this shore, when he added, —

> "Till in sheltered coves, and reaches
> Of sandy beaches,
> All have found repose again."

These weeds were the symbols of those grotesque and fabulous thoughts which have not yet got into the sheltered coves of literature.

> "Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
> On the shifting
> Currents of the restless heart;"
> *And not yet* "in books recorded,
> They, like hoarded
> Household words, no more depart."

The beach was also strewn with beautiful sea-jellies, which the wreckers called sun-squall, one of the lowest forms of animal life, some white, some wine-colored, and a foot in diameter. I at first thought that they were a tender part of some marine monster, which the storm or some other foe had mangled. What right has the sea to bear in its bosom such tender things as sea-jellies and mosses, when it has such a boisterous shore, that the stoutest fabrics are wrecked against it? Strange that it should undertake to dandle such delicate children in its arm. I did not at first recognize these for the same which I had formerly seen in myriads in Boston Harbor, rising, with a waving motion, to the surface, as if to meet the sun, and discoloring the waters far and wide, so that I seemed to be sailing through a mere sun-fish soup. They say that when you endeavor to take one up, it will spill out the other side of your

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hand like quicksilver. Before the land rose out of the ocean, and became *dry* land, chaos reigned; and between high and low water mark, where she is partially disrobed and rising, a sort of chaos reigns still, which only anomalous creatures can inhabit. Mackerel gulls were all the while flying over our heads and amid the breakers, sometimes two white ones pursuing a black one; quite at home in the storm, though they are as delicate organizations as sea-jellies and mosses; and we saw that they were adapted to their circumstances rather by their spirits than their bodies. Theirs must be an essentially wilder, that is, less human, nature, than that of larks and robins. Their note was like the sound of some vibrating metal, and harmonized well with the scenery and the roar of the surf, as if one had rudely touched the strings of the lyre, which ever lies on the shore; a ragged shred of ocean music tossed aloft on the spray. But if I were required to name a sound the remembrance of which most perfectly revives the impression which the beach has made, it would be the dreary peep of the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) which haunts there. Their voices, too, are heard as a fugacious part in the dirge which is ever played along the shore for those mariners who have been lost in the deep since first it was created. But through all this dreariness we seemed to have a pure and unqualified strain of eternal melody, for always the same strain which is a dirge to one household is a morning song of rejoicing to another.

A remarkable method of catching gulls, derived from the Indians, was practiced in Wellfleet in 1794.

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"The Gull House," it is said, "is built with crotches, fixed in the ground on the beach," poles being stretched across for the top, and the sides made close with stakes and seaweed. "The poles on the top [are] covered with lean whale. The man, being placed within, is not discovered by the fowls, and, while they are contending for and eating the flesh, he draws them in, one by one, between the poles, until he has collected forty or fifty." Hence, perchance, a man is said to be *gulled*, when he is *taken in*. We read that one "sort of gulls is called by the Dutch *mallemucke*, *i. e.*, the foolish fly, because they fall upon a whale as eagerly as a fly, and, indeed, all gulls are foolishly bold and easy to be shot. The Norwegians call this bird *havhest*, sea-horse (and the English translator says, it is probably what we call boobies). If they have eaten too much, they throw it up, and eat it again till they are tired. It is this habit in the gulls of parting with their property [disgorging the contents of their stomachs to the skuas], which has given rise to the terms gull, guller, and gulling, among men." We also read that they used to kill small birds which roosted on the beach at night, by making a fire with hog's lard in a frying-pan. The Indians probably used pine torches; the birds flocked to the light, and were knocked down with a stick. We noticed holes dug near the edge of the bank, where gunners conceal themselves to shoot the large gulls which coast up and down a-fishing, for these are considered good to eat.

We found some large clams, of the species *Mactra solidissima*, which the storm had torn up from the bot-

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tom, and cast ashore. I selected one of the largest, about six inches in length, and carried it along, thinking to try an experiment on it. We soon after met a wrecker, with a grapple and a rope, who said that he was looking for tow cloth, which had made part of the cargo of the ship Franklin, which was wrecked here in the spring, at which time nine or ten lives were lost. The reader may remember this wreck, from the circumstance that a letter was found in the captain's valise, which washed ashore, directing him to wreck the vessel before he got to America, and from the trial which took place in consequence. The wrecker said that tow cloth was still cast up in such storms as this. He also told us that the clam which I had was the sea-clam, or hen, and was good to eat. We took our nooning under a sand-hill, covered with beach-grass, in a dreary little hollow, on the top of the bank, while it alternately rained and shined. There, having reduced some damp driftwood, which I had picked up on the shore, to shavings with my knife, I kindled a fire with a match and some paper, and cooked my clam on the embers for my dinner; for breakfast was commonly the only meal which I took in a house on this excursion. When the clam was done, one valve held the meat, and the other the liquor. Though it was very tough, I found it sweet and savory, and ate *the whole* with a relish. Indeed, with the addition of a cracker or two, it would have been a bountiful dinner. I noticed that the shells were such as I had seen in the sugar-kit at home. Tied to a stick, they formerly made the Indian's hoe hereabouts.

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At length, by mid-afternoon, after we had had two or three rainbows over the sea, the showers ceased, and the heavens gradually cleared up, though the wind still blowed as hard and the breakers ran as high as before. Keeping on, we soon after came to a charity-house, which we looked into to see how the shipwrecked mariner might fare. Far away in some desolate hollow by the seaside, just within the bank, stands a lonely building on piles driven into the sand, with a slight nail put through the staple, which a freezing man can bend, with some straw, perchance, on the floor on which he may lie, or which he may burn in the fireplace to keep him alive. Perhaps this hut has never been required to shelter a shipwrecked man, and the benevolent person who promised to inspect it annually, to see that the straw and matches are here, and that the boards will keep off the wind, has grown remiss and thinks that storms and shipwrecks are over; and this very night a perishing crew may pry open its door with their numbed fingers and leave half their number dead here by morning. When I thought what must be the condition of the families which alone would ever occupy or had occupied them, what must have been the tragedy of the winter evenings spent by human beings around their hearths, these houses, though they were meant for human dwellings, did not look cheerful to me. They appeared but a stage to the grave. The gulls flew around and screamed over them; the roar of the ocean in storms, and the lapse of its waves in calms, alone resounds through them, all dark and empty within, year in, year out, except, perchance, on

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one memorable night. Houses of entertainment for shipwrecked men! What kind of sailor's homes were they?

"Each hut," says the author of the "Description of the Eastern Coast of the County of Barnstable," "stands on piles, is eight feet long, eight feet wide, and seven feet high; a sliding door is on the south, a sliding shutter on the west, and a pole, rising fifteen feet above the top of the building, on the east. Within, it is supplied either with straw or hay; and is farther accommodated with a bench." They have varied little from this model now. There are similar huts at the Isle of Sable and Anticosti, on the north, and how far south along the coast I know not. It is pathetic to read the minute and faithful directions which he gives to seamen who may be wrecked on this coast, to guide them to the nearest charity-house, or other shelter, for, as is said of Eastham, though there are a few houses within a mile of the shore, yet "in a snow storm, which rages here with excessive fury, it would be almost impossible to discover them either by night or by day." You hear their imaginary guide thus marshalling, cheering, directing the dripping, shivering, freezing troop along: "At the entrance of this valley, the sand has gathered; so that at present a little climbing is necessary. Passing over several fences, and taking heed not to enter the wood on the right hand, at the distance of three quarters of a mile, a house is to be found. This house stands on the south side of the road; and not far from it, on the south, is Pamet River, which runs from east to west through a body of salt

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marsh." To him cast ashore in Eastham, he says, "The meeting house is without a steeple; but it may be distinguished from the dwelling houses near it by its situation, which is between two small groves of locusts, one on the south, and one on the north, that on the south being three times as long as the other. About a mile and a quarter from the hut, west by north, appear the top and arms of a windmill." And so on for many pages.

We did not learn whether these houses had been the means of saving any lives, though this writer says, of one erected at the head of Stout's Creek, in Truro, that "it was built in an improper manner, having a chimney in it; and was placed on a spot where no beach grass grew. The strong winds blew the sand from its foundation, and the weight of the chimney brought it to the ground; so that in January of the present year [1802] it was entirely demolished. This event took place about six weeks before the Brutus was cast away. If it had remained, it is probable that the whole of the unfortunate crew of that ship would have been saved, as they gained the shore a few rods only from the spot where the hut had stood."

This "charity-house," as the wrecker called it, this "Humane house," as some call it, that is, the one to which we first came, had neither window nor sliding shutter, nor clapboards, nor paint. As we have said, there was a rusty nail put through the staple. However, as we wished to get an idea of a Humane house, and we hoped that we should never have a better opportunity, we put our eyes, by turns, to a knot-hole in

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the door, and, after long looking, without seeing, into the dark, — not knowing how many shipwrecked men's bones we might see at last, looking with the eye of faith, knowing that, though to him that knocketh it may not always be opened, yet to him that looketh long enough through a knot-hole the inside shall be visible, — for we had had some practice at looking inward, — by steadily keeping our other ball covered from the light meanwhile, putting the outward world behind us, ocean and land, and the beach, — till the pupil became enlarged and collected the rays of light that were wandering in that dark (for the pupil shall be enlarged by looking; there never was so dark a night but a faithful and patient eye, however small, might at last prevail over it), — after all this, I say, things began to take shape to our vision, — if we may use this expression where there was nothing but emptiness, — and we obtained the long-wished-for insight. Though we thought at first that it was a hopeless case, after several minutes' steady exercise of the divine faculty, our prospects began decidedly to brighten, and we were ready to exclaim with the blind bard of "Paradise Lost and Regained," —

> "Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven first-born,
> Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
> May I express thee unblamed?"

A little longer, and a chimney rushed red on our sight. In short, when our vision had grown familiar with the darkness, we discovered that there were some stones and some loose wads of wool on the floor, and an empty fireplace at the further end; but it *was not*

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supplied with matches, or straw, or hay, that we could see, nor "accommodated with a bench." Indeed, it was the wreck of all cosmical beauty there within.

Turning our backs on the outward world, we thus looked through the knot-hole into the Humane house, into the very bowels of mercy; and for bread we found a stone. It was literally a great cry (of sea-mews outside), and a little wool. However, we were glad to sit outside, under the lee of the Humane house, to escape the piercing wind; and there we thought how cold is charity! how inhumane humanity! This, then, is what charity hides! Virtues antique and far away, with ever a rusty nail over the latch; and very difficult to keep in repair, withal, it is so uncertain whether any will ever gain the beach near you. So we shivered round about, not being able to get into it, ever and anon looking through the knot-hole into that night without a star, until we concluded that it was not a *humane* house at all, but a seaside box, now shut up, belonging to some of the family of Night or Chaos, where they spent their summers by the sea, for the sake of the sea-breeze, and that it was not proper for us to be prying into their concerns.

My companion had declared before this that I had not a particle of sentiment, in rather absolute terms, to my astonishment; but I suspect he meant that my legs did not ache just then, though I am not wholly a stranger to that sentiment. But I did not intend this for a sentimental journey.

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V

THE WELLFLEET OYSTERMAN

HAVING walked about eight miles since we struck the beach, and passed the boundary between Wellfleet and Truro, a stone post in the sand, — for even this sand comes under the jurisdiction of one town or another, — we turned inland over barren hills and valleys, whither the sea, for some reason, did not follow us, and, tracing up a Hollow, discovered two or three sober-looking houses within half a mile, uncommonly near the eastern coast. Their garrets were apparently so full of chambers, that their roofs could hardly lie down straight, and we did not doubt that there was room for us there. Houses near the sea are generally low and broad. These were a story and a half high; but if you merely counted the windows in their gable ends, you would think that there were many stories more, or, at any rate, that the half-story was the only one thought worthy of being illustrated. The great number of windows in the ends of the houses, and their irregularity in size and position, here and elsewhere on the Cape, struck us agreeably, — as if each of the various occupants who had their *cunabula* behind had punched a hole where his necessities required it, and according to his size and stature, without regard to outside effect. There were windows for the grown folks, and windows for the children, — three or four apiece; as a certain

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man had a large hole cut in his barn-door for the cat, and another smaller one for the kitten. Sometimes they were so low under the eaves that I thought they must have perforated the plate beam for another apartment, and I noticed some which were triangular, to fit that part more exactly. The ends of the houses had thus as many muzzles as a revolver, and, if the inhabitants have the same habit of staring out the windows that some of our neighbors have, a traveler must stand a small chance with them.

Generally, the old-fashioned and unpainted houses on the Cape looked more comfortable, as well as picturesque, than the modern and more pretending ones, which were less in harmony with the scenery, and less firmly planted.

These houses were on the shores of a chain of ponds, seven in number, the source of a small stream called Herring River, which empties into the Bay. There are many Herring Rivers on the Cape; they will, perhaps, be more numerous than herrings soon. We knocked at the door of the first house, but its inhabitants were all gone away. In the meanwhile, we saw the occupants of the next one looking out the window at us, and before we reached it an old woman came out and fastened the door of her bulkhead, and went in again. Nevertheless, we did not hesitate to knock at her door, when a grizzly-looking man appeared, whom we took to be sixty or seventy years old. He asked us, at first, suspiciously, where we were from, and what our business was; to which we returned plain answers.

"How far is Concord from Boston?" he inquired.

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"Twenty miles by railroad."

"Twenty miles by railroad," he repeated.

"Did n't you ever hear of Concord of Revolutionary fame?"

"Did n't I ever hear of Concord? Why, I heard guns fire at the battle of Bunker Hill. [They hear the sound of heavy cannon across the Bay.] I am almost ninety; I am eighty-eight year old. I was fourteen year old at the time of Concord Fight, — and where were you then?"

We were obliged to confess that we were not in the fight.

"Well, walk in, we 'll leave it to the women," said he.

So we walked in, surprised, and sat down, an old woman taking our hats and bundles, and the old man continued, drawing up to the large, old-fashioned fireplace, —

"I am a poor, good-for-nothing crittur, as Isaiah says; I am all broken down this year. I am under petticoat government here."

The family consisted of the old man, his wife, and his daughter, who appeared nearly as old as her mother, a fool, her son (a brutish-looking, middle-aged man, with a prominent lower face, who was standing by the hearth when we entered, but immediately went out), and a little boy of ten.

While my companion talked with the women, I talked with the old man. They said that he was old and foolish, but he was evidently too knowing for them.

"These women," said he to me, "are both of them poor good-for-nothing critturs. This one is my wife.

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I married her sixty-four years ago. She is eighty-four years old, and as deaf as an adder, and the other is not much better."

He thought well of the Bible, or at least he *spoke* well, and did not *think* ill, of it, for that would not have been prudent for a man of his age. He said that he had read it attentively for many years, and he had much of it at his tongue's end. He seemed deeply impressed with a sense of his own nothingness, and would repeatedly exclaim, —

"I am a nothing. What I gather from my Bible is just this; that man is a poor good-for-nothing crittur, and everything is just as God sees fit and disposes."

"May I ask your name?" I said.

"Yes," he answered, "I am not ashamed to tell my name. My name is ——. My great-grandfather came over from England and settled here."

He was an old Wellfleet oysterman, who had acquired a competency in that business, and had sons still engaged in it.

Nearly all the oyster shops and stands in Massachusetts, I am told, are supplied and kept by natives of Wellfleet, and a part of this town is still called Billingsgate from the oysters having been formerly planted there; but the native oysters are said to have died in 1770. Various causes are assigned for this, such as a ground frost, the carcasses of blackfish, kept to rot in the harbor, and the like, but the most common account of the matter is, — and I find that a similar superstition with regard to the disappearance of fishes exists almost everywhere, — that when Wellfleet began to quarrel

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with the neighboring towns about the right to gather them, yellow specks appeared in them, and Providence caused them to disappear. A few years ago sixty thousand bushels were annually brought from the South and planted in the harbor of Wellfleet till they attained "the proper relish of Billingsgate;" but now they are imported commonly full-grown, and laid down near their markets, at Boston and elsewhere, where the water, being a mixture of salt and fresh, suits them better. The business was said to be still good and improving.

The old man said that the oysters were liable to freeze in the winter, if planted too high; but if it were not "so cold as to strain their eyes" they were not injured. The inhabitants of New Brunswick have noticed that "ice will not form over an oyster-bed, unless the cold is very intense indeed, and when the bays are frozen over the oyster-beds are easily discovered by the water above them remaining unfrozen, or as the French residents say, *dégelée*." Our host said that they kept them in cellars all winter.

"Without anything to eat or drink?" I asked.

"Without anything to eat or drink," he answered.

"Can the oysters move?"

"Just as much as my shoe."

But when I caught him saying that they "bedded themselves down in the sand, flat side up, round side down," I told him that my shoe could not do that, without the aid of my foot in it; at which he said that they merely settled down as they grew; if put down in a square they would be found so; but the clam could

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move quite fast. I have since been told by oystermen of Long Island, where the oyster is still indigenous and abundant, that they are found in large masses attached to the parent in their midst, and are so taken up with their tongs; in which case, they say, the age of the young proves that there could have been no motion for five or six years at least. And Buckland in his "Curiosities of Natural History" (page 50) says: "An oyster, who has once taken up his position and fixed himself when quite young, can never make a change. Oysters, nevertheless, that have not fixed themselves, but remain loose at the bottom of the sea, have the power of locomotion; they open their shells to their fullest extent, and then suddenly contracting them, the expulsion of the water forwards gives a motion backwards. A fisherman at Guernsey told me that he had frequently seen oysters moving in this way."

Some still entertain the question "whether the oyster was indigenous in Massachusetts Bay," and whether Wellfleet Harbor was a "natural habitat" of this fish; but, to say nothing of the testimony of old oystermen, which, I think, is quite conclusive, though the native oyster may now be extinct there, I saw that their shells, opened by the Indians, were strewn all over the Cape. Indeed, the Cape was at first thickly settled by Indians on account of the abundance of these and other fish. We saw many traces of their occupancy after this, in Truro, near Great Hollow, and at High Head, near East Harbor River, — oysters, clams, cockles, and other shells, mingled with ashes and the bones of deer and other quadrupeds. I picked up half a dozen arrow-

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heads, and in an hour or two could have filled my pockets with them. The Indians lived about the edges of the swamps, then probably in some instances ponds, for shelter and water. Moreover, Champlain, in the edition of his "Voyages" printed in 1613, says that in the year 1606 he and Poitrincourt explored a harbor (Barnstable Harbor?) in the southerly part of what is now called Massachusetts Bay, in latitude 42°, about five leagues south, one point west of *Cap Blanc* (Cape Cod), and there they found many good oysters, and they named it "*le Port aux Huistres*" [sic] (Oyster Harbor). In one edition of his map (1632), the "*R. aux Escailles*" is drawn emptying into the same part of the bay, and on the map "*Novi Belgii*," in Ogilby's America (1670), the words "*Port aux Huistres*" are placed against the same place. Also William Wood, who left New England in 1633, speaks, in his "New England's Prospect," published in 1634, of "a great oyster-bank" in Charles River, and of another in the Mistick, each of which obstructed the navigation of its river. "The oysters," says he, "be great ones in form of a shoe-horn; some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth." Oysters are still found there.[1]

Our host told us that the sea-clam, or hen, was not easily obtained; it was raked up, but never on the Atlantic side, only cast ashore there in small quantities in storms. The fisherman sometimes wades in

[1] Also, see Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*, p. 90.

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water several feet deep, and thrusts a pointed stick into the sand before him. When this enters between the valves of a clam, he closes them on it, and is drawn out. It has been known to catch and hold coot and teal which were preying on it. I chanced to be on the bank of the Acushnet at New Bedford one day since this, watching some ducks, when a man informed me that, having let out his young ducks to seek their food amid the samphire (*Salicornia*) and other weeds along the riverside at low tide that morning, at length he noticed that one remained stationary, amid the weeds, something preventing it from following the others, and going to it he found its foot tightly shut in a quahog's shell. He took up both together, carried them to his home, and his wife opening the shell with a knife released the duck and cooked the quahog. The old man said that the great clams were good to eat, but that they always took out a certain part which was poisonous, before they cooked them. "People said it would kill a cat." I did not tell him that I had eaten a large one entire that afternoon, but began to think that I was tougher than a cat. He stated that pedlers came round there, and sometimes tried to sell the women folks a skimmer, but he told them that their women had got a better skimmer than *they* could make, in the shell of their clams; it was shaped just right for this purpose. — They call them "skim-alls" in some places. He also said that the sun-squall was poisonous to handle, and when the sailors came across it, they did not meddle with it, but heaved it out of their way. I told him that I had handled it that afternoon, and had

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felt no ill effects as yet. But he said it made the hands itch, especially if they had previously been scratched, or if I put it into my bosom, I should find out what it was.

He informed us that no ice ever formed on the back side of the Cape, or not more than once in a century, and but little snow lay there, it being either absorbed or blown or washed away. Sometimes in winter, when the tide was down, the beach was frozen, and afforded a hard road up the back side for some thirty miles, as smooth as a floor. One winter when he was a boy, he and his father "took right out into the Back Side before daylight, and walked to Provincetown and back to dinner."

When I asked what they did with all that barren-looking land, where I saw so few cultivated fields, — "Nothing," he said.

"Then why fence your fields?"

"To keep the sand from blowing and covering up the whole."

"The yellow sand," said he, "has some life in it, but the white little or none."

When, in answer to his questions, I told him that I was a surveyor, he said that they who surveyed his farm were accustomed, where the ground was uneven, to loop up each chain as high as their elbows; that was the allowance they made, and he wished to know if I could tell him why they did not come out according to his deed, or twice alike. He seemed to have more respect for surveyors of the old school, which I did not wonder at. "King George the Third," said he, "laid out a road four rods wide and straight, the whole length

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of the Cape," but where it was now he could not tell.

This story of the surveyors reminded me of a Long-Islander, who once, when I had made ready to jump from the bow of his boat to the shore, and he thought that I underrated the distance and would fall short, — though I found afterward that he judged of the elasticity of my joints by his own, — told me that when he came to a brook which he wanted to get over, he held up one leg, and then, if his foot appeared to cover any part of the opposite bank, he knew that he could jump it. "Why," I told him, "to say nothing of the Mississippi, and other small watery streams, I could blot out a star with my foot, but I would not engage to jump that distance," and asked how he knew when he had got his leg at the right elevation. But he regarded his legs as no less accurate than a pair of screw dividers or an ordinary quadrant, and appeared to have a painful recollection of every degree and minute in the arc which they described; and he would have had me believe that there was a kind of hitch in his hip-joint which answered the purpose. I suggested that he should connect his two ankles by a string of the proper length, which should be the chord of an arc, measuring his jumping ability on horizontal surfaces, — assuming one leg to be a perpendicular to the plane of the horizon, which, however, may have been too bold an assumption in this case. Nevertheless, this was a kind of geometry in the legs which it interested me to hear of.

Our host took pleasure in telling us the names of the ponds, most of which we could see from his windows,

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and making us repeat them after him, to see if we had got them right. They were Gull Pond, the largest and a very handsome one, clear and deep, and more than a mile in circumference, Newcomb's, Swett's, Slough, Horse-Leech, Round, and Herring Ponds, all connected at high water, if I do not mistake. The coast-surveyors had come to him for their names, and he told them of one which they had not detected. He said that they were not so high as formerly. There was an earthquake about four years before he was born, which cracked the pans of the ponds, which were of iron, and caused them to settle. I did not remember to have read of this. Innumerable gulls used to resort to them; but the large gulls were now very scarce, for, as he said, the English robbed their nests far in the north, where they breed. He remembered well when gulls were taken in the gull-house, and when small birds were killed by means of a frying-pan and fire at night. His father once lost a valuable horse from this cause. A party from Wellfleet having lighted their fire for this purpose, one dark night, on Billingsgate Island, twenty horses which were pastured there, and this colt among them, being frightened by it, and endeavoring in the dark to cross the passage which separated them from the neighboring beach, and which was then fordable at low tide, were all swept out to sea and drowned. I observed that many horses were still turned out to pasture all summer on the islands and beaches in Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans, as a kind of common. He also described the killing of what he called "wild hens," here, after they had gone to roost in the woods,

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when he was a boy. Perhaps they were "prairie hens" (pinnated grouse).

He liked the beach pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*), cooked green, as well as the cultivated. He had seen it growing very abundantly in Newfoundland, where also the inhabitants ate them, but he had never been able to obtain any ripe for seed. We read, under the head of Chatham, that "in 1555, during a time of great scarcity, the people about Orford, in Sussex [England] were preserved from perishing by eating the seeds of this plant, which grew there in great abundance upon the sea coast. Cows, horses, sheep, and goats eat it." But the writer who quoted this could not learn that they had ever been used in Barnstable County.

He had been a voyager, then? Oh, he had been about the world in his day. He once considered himself a pilot for all our coast; but now they had changed the names so he might be bothered.

He gave us to taste what he called the Summer Sweeting, a pleasant apple which he raised, and frequently grafted from, but had never seen growing elsewhere, except once, — three trees on Newfoundland, or at the Bay of Chaleur, I forget which, as he was sailing by. He was sure that he could tell the tree at a distance.

At length the fool, whom my companion called the wizard, came in, muttering between his teeth, "Damn book-pedlers, — all the time talking about books. Better do something. Damn 'em. I'll shoot 'em. Got a doctor down here. Damn him, I'll get a gun and shoot him;" never once holding up his head. Whereat

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the old man stood up and said in a loud voice, as if he was accustomed to command, and this was not the first time he had been obliged to exert his authority there: "John, go sit down, mind your business, — we've heard you talk before, — precious little you'll do, — your bark is worse than your bite." But, without minding, John muttered the same gibberish over again, and then sat down at the table which the old folks had left. He ate all there was on it, and then turned to the apples, which his aged mother was paring, that she might give her guests some apple-sauce for breakfast, but she drew them away and sent him off.

When I approached this house the next summer, over the desolate hills between it and the shore, which are worthy to have been the birthplace of Ossian, I saw the wizard in the midst of a corn-field on the hillside, but, as usual, he loomed so strangely, that I mistook him for a scarecrow.

This was the merriest old man that we had ever seen, and one of the best preserved. His style of conversation was coarse and plain enough to have suited Rabelais. He would have made a good Panurge. Or rather he was a sober Silenus, and we were the boys Chromis and Mnasilus, who listened to his story.

> "Not by Hæmonian hills the Thracian bard,
> Nor awful Phœbus was on Pindus heard
> With deeper silence or with more regard."

There was a strange mingling of past and present in his conversation, for he had lived under King George, and might have remembered when Napoleon and the

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moderns generally were born. He said that one day, when the troubles between the Colonies and the mother country first broke out, as he, a boy of fifteen, was pitching hay out of a cart, one Donne, an old Tory, who was talking with his father, a good Whig, said to him, "Why, Uncle Bill, you might as well undertake to pitch that pond into the ocean with a pitchfork, as for the Colonies to undertake to gain their independence." He remembered well General Washington, and how he rode his horse along the streets of Boston, and he stood up to show us how he looked.

"He was a r—a—ther large and portly-looking man, a manly and resolute-looking officer, with a pretty good leg as he sat on his horse." — "There, I'll tell you, this was the way with Washington." Then he jumped up again, and bowed gracefully to right and left, making show as if he were waving his hat. Said he, "*That* was Washington."

He told us many anecdotes of the Revolution, and was much pleased when we told him that we had read the same in history, and that his account agreed with the written.

"Oh," he said, "I know, I know! I was a young fellow of sixteen, with my ears wide open; and a fellow of that age, you know, is pretty wide awake, and likes to know everything that 's going on. Oh, I know!"

He told us the story of the wreck of the Franklin, which took place there the previous spring; how a boy came to his house early in the morning to know whose boat that was by the shore, for there was a vessel in distress, and he, being an old man, first ate his break-

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fast, and then walked over to the top of the hill by the shore, and sat down there, having found a comfortable seat, to see the ship wrecked. She was on the bar, only a quarter of a mile from him, and still nearer to the men on the beach, who had got a boat ready, but could render no assistance on account of the breakers, for there was a pretty high sea running. There were the passengers all crowded together in the forward part of the ship, and some were getting out of the cabin windows and were drawn on deck by the others.

"I saw the captain get out his boat," said he; "he had one little one; and then they jumped into it one after another, down as straight as an arrow. I counted them. There were nine. One was a woman, and she jumped as straight as any of them. Then they shoved off. The sea took them back, one wave went over them, and when they came up there were six still clinging to the boat; I counted them. The next wave turned the boat bottom upward, and emptied them all out. None of them ever came ashore alive. There were the rest of them all crowded together on the forecastle, the other parts of the ship being under water. They had seen all that happened to the boat. At length a heavy sea separated the forecastle from the rest of the wreck, and set it inside of the worst breaker, and the boat was able to reach them, and it saved all that were left, but one woman."

He also told us of the steamer Cambria's getting aground on this shore a few months before we were there, and of her English passengers who roamed over

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his grounds, and who, he said, thought the prospect from the high hill by the shore, "the most delightsome they had ever seen," and also of the pranks which the ladies played with his scoop-net in the ponds. He spoke of these travelers with their purses full of guineas, just as our provincial fathers used to speak of British bloods in the time of King George the Third.

Quid loquar? Why repeat what he told us?

> "Aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est,
> Candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris,
> Dulichias vexâsse rates, et gurgite in alto
> Ah! timidos nautas canibus lacerâsse marinis?"

In the course of the evening I began to feel the potency of the clam which I had eaten, and I was obliged to confess to our host that I was no tougher than the cat he told of; but he answered, that he was a plain-spoken man, and he could tell me that it was all imagination. At any rate, it proved an emetic in my case, and I was made quite sick by it for a short time, while he laughed at my expense. I was pleased to read afterward, in Mourt's Relation of the landing of the Pilgrims in Provincetown Harbor, these words: "We found great muscles [the old editor says that they were undoubtedly sea-clams] and very fat and full of sea-pearl; but we could not eat them, for they made us all sick that did eat, as well sailors as passengers, . . . but they were soon well again." It brought me nearer to the Pilgrims to be thus reminded by a similar experience that I was so like them. Moreover, it was a valuable confirmation of their story, and I am prepared now to believe every word of Mourt's Relation. I was

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also pleased to find that man and the clam lay still at the same angle to one another. But I did not notice sea-pearl. Like Cleopatra, I must have swallowed it. I have since dug these clams on a flat in the Bay and observed them. They could squirt full ten feet before the wind, as appeared by the marks of the drops on the sand.

"Now I am going to ask you a question," said the old man, "and I don't know as you can tell me; but you are a learned man, and I never had any learning, only what I got by natur." — It was in vain that we reminded him that he could quote Josephus to our confusion. — "I've thought, if I ever met a learned man I should like to ask him this question. Can you tell me how *Axy* is spelt, and what it means? *Axy*," says he; "there's a girl over here is named *Axy*. Now what is it? What does it mean? Is it Scripture? I've read my Bible twenty-five years over and over, and I never came across it."

"Did you read it twenty-five years for this object?" I asked.

"Well, *how* is it spelt? Wife, how is it spelt?"

She said, "It is in the Bible; I've seen it."

"Well, how do you spell it?"

"I don't know. A c h, ach, s e h, seh, — Achseh."

"Does that spell Axy? Well, do *you* know what it means?" asked he, turning to me.

"No," I replied, "I never heard the sound before."

"There was a schoolmaster down here once, and they asked him what it meant, and he said it had no more meaning than a bean-pole."

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I told him that I held the same opinion with the schoolmaster. I had been a schoolmaster myself, and had had strange names to deal with. I also heard of such names as Zoheth, Beriah, Amaziah, Bethuel, and Shearjashub, hereabouts.

At length the little boy, who had a seat quite in the chimney-corner, took off his stockings and shoes, warmed his feet, and having had his sore leg freshly salved, went off to bed; then the fool made bare his knotty-looking feet and legs, and followed him; and finally the old man exposed his calves also to our gaze. We had never had the good fortune to see an old man's legs before, and were surprised to find them fair and plump as an infant's, and we thought that he took a pride in exhibiting them. He then proceeded to make preparations for retiring, discoursing meanwhile with Panurgic plainness of speech on the ills to which old humanity is subject. We were a rare haul for him. He could commonly get none but ministers to talk to, though sometimes ten of them at once, and he was glad to meet some of the laity at leisure. The evening was not long enough for him. As I had been sick, the old lady asked if I would not go to bed, — it was getting late for old people; but the old man, who had not yet done his stories, said, "You ain't particular, are you?"

"Oh, no," said I, "I am in no hurry. I believe I have weathered the Clam cape."

"They are good," said he; "I wish I had some of them now."

"They never hurt me," said the old lady.

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"But then you took out the part that killed a cat," said I.

At last we cut him short in the midst of his stories, which he promised to resume in the morning. Yet, after all, one of the old ladies who came into our room in the night to fasten the fire-board, which rattled, as she went out took the precaution to fasten us in. Old women are by nature more suspicious than old men. However, the winds howled around the house, and made the fire-boards as well as the casements rattle well that night. It was probably a windy night for any locality, but we could not distinguish the roar which was proper to the ocean from that which was due to the wind alone.

The sounds which the ocean makes must be very significant and interesting to those who live near it. When I was leaving the shore at this place the next summer, and had got a quarter of a mile distant, ascending a hill, I was startled by a sudden, loud sound from the sea, as if a large steamer were letting off steam by the shore, so that I caught my breath and felt my blood run cold for an instant, and I turned about, expecting to see one of the Atlantic steamers thus far out of her course, but there was nothing unusual to be seen. There was a low bank at the entrance of the Hollow, between me and the ocean, and suspecting that I might have risen into another stratum of air in ascending the hill, — which had wafted to me only the ordinary roar of the sea, — I immediately descended again, to see if I lost hearing of it; but, without regard to my ascending or descending, it died away in a

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minute or two, and yet there was scarcely any wind all the while. The old man said that this was what they called the "rut," a peculiar roar of the sea before the wind changes, which, however, he could not account for. He thought that he could tell all about the weather from the sounds which the sea made.

Old Josselyn, who came to New England in 1638, has it among his weather-signs, that "the resounding of the sea from the shore, and murmuring of the winds in the woods, without apparent wind, sheweth wind to follow."

Being on another part of the coast one night since this, I heard the roar of the surf a mile distant, and the inhabitants said it was a sign that the wind would work round east, and we should have rainy weather. The ocean was heaped up somewhere at the eastward, and this roar was occasioned by its effort to preserve its equilibrium, the wave reaching the shore before the wind. Also the captain of a packet between this country and England told me that he sometimes met with a wave on the Atlantic coming against the wind, perhaps in a calm sea, which indicated that at a distance the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter, but the undulation had traveled faster than it. Sailors tell of "tide-rips" and "ground-swells," which they suppose to have been occasioned by hurricanes and earthquakes, and to have traveled many hundred, and sometimes even two or three thousand miles.

Before sunrise the next morning they let us out again, and I ran over to the beach to see the sun come out of the ocean. The old woman of eighty-four win-

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ters was already out in the cold morning wind, bareheaded, tripping about like a young girl, and driving up the cow to milk. She got the breakfast with dispatch, and without noise or bustle; and meanwhile the old man resumed his stories, standing before us, who were sitting, with his back to the chimney, and ejecting his tobacco-juice right and left into the fire behind him, without regard to the various dishes which were there preparing. At breakfast we had eels, buttermilk cake, cold bread, green beans, doughnuts, and tea. The old man talked a steady stream; and when his wife told him he had better eat his breakfast, he said, "Don't hurry me; I have lived too long to be hurried." I ate of the apple-sauce and the doughnuts, which I thought had sustained the least detriment from the old man's shots, but my companion refused the apple-sauce, and ate of the hot cake and green beans, which had appeared to him to occupy the safest part of the hearth. But on comparing notes afterward, I told him that the buttermilk cake was particularly exposed, and I saw how it suffered repeatedly, and therefore I avoided it; but he declared that, however that might be, he witnessed that the apple-sauce was seriously injured, and had therefore declined that. After breakfast we looked at his clock, which was out of order, and oiled it with some "hen's grease," for want of sweet oil, for he scarcely could believe that we were not tinkers or pedlers; meanwhile, he told a story about visions, which had reference to a crack in the clock-case made by frost one night. He was curious to know to what religious sect we belonged. He said that he had been to hear thirteen

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kinds of preaching in one month, when he was young, but he did not join any of them, — he stuck to his Bible. There was nothing like any of them in his Bible. While I was shaving in the next room, I heard him ask my companion to what sect he belonged, to which he answered, —

"Oh, I belong to the Universal Brotherhood."

"What 's that?" he asked, "Sons o' Temperance?"

Finally, filling our pockets with doughnuts, which he was pleased to find that we called by the same name that he did, and paying for our entertainment, we took our departure; but he followed us out of doors, and made us tell him the names of the vegetables which he had raised from seeds that came out of the Franklin. They were cabbage, broccoli, and parsley. As I had asked him the names of so many things, he tried me in turn with all the plants which grew in his garden, both wild and cultivated. It was about half an acre, which he cultivated wholly himself. Besides the common garden vegetables, there were yellow dock, lemon balm, hyssop, gill-go-over-the-ground, mouse-ear, chickweed, Roman wormwood, elecampane, and other plants. As we stood there, I saw a fish hawk stoop to pick a fish out of his pond.

"There," said I, "he has got a fish."

"Well," said the old man, who was looking all the while, but could see nothing, "he did n't dive, he just wet his claws."

And, sure enough, he did not this time, though it is said that they often do, but he merely stooped low enough to pick him out with his talons; but as he bore

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his shining prey over the bushes, it fell to the ground, and we did not see that he recovered it. That is not their practice.

Thus, having had another crack with the old man, he standing bareheaded under the eaves, he directed us "athwart the fields," and we took to the beach again for another day, it being now late in the morning.

It was but a day or two after this that the safe of the Provincetown Bank was broken open and robbed by two men from the interior, and we learned that our hospitable entertainers did at least transiently harbor the suspicion that we were the men.

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VI

THE BEACH AGAIN

Our way to the high sand-bank which I have described as extending all along the coast led, as usual, through patches of bayberry bushes, which straggled into the sand. This, next to the shrub oak, was perhaps the most common shrub thereabouts. I was much attracted by its odoriferous leaves and small gray berries which are clustered about the short twigs, just below the last year's growth. I know of but two bushes in Concord, and they, being staminate plants, do not bear fruit. The berries gave it a venerable appearance, and they smelled quite spicy, like small confectionery. Robert Beverley, in his "History of Virginia," published in 1705, states that "at the mouth of their rivers, and all along upon the sea and bay, and near many of their creeks and swamps, grows the myrtle, bearing a berry, of which they make a hard, brittle wax, of a curious green color, which by refining becomes almost transparent. Of this they make candles, which are never greasy to the touch nor melt with lying in the hottest weather; neither does the snuff of these ever offend the smell, like that of a tallow candle; but, instead of being disagreeable, if an accident puts a candle out, it yields a pleasant fragrancy to all that are in the room; insomuch that nice people often put them out on purpose to have the incense of the expiring snuff. The

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melting of these berries is said to have been first found out by a surgeon in New England, who performed wonderful things with a salve made of them." From the abundance of berries still hanging on the bushes, we judged that the inhabitants did not generally collect them for tallow, though we had seen a piece in the house we had just left. I have since made some tallow myself. Holding a basket beneath the bare twigs in April, I rubbed them together between my hands and thus gathered about a quart in twenty minutes, to which were added enough to make three pints, and I might have gathered them much faster with a suitable rake and a large shallow basket. They have little prominences like those of an orange all creased in tallow, which also fills the interstices down to the stone. The oily part rose to the top, making it look like a savory black broth, which smelled much like balm or other herb tea. You let it cool, then skim off the tallow from the surface, melt this again, and strain it. I got about a quarter of a pound weight from my three pints, and more yet remained within the berries. A small portion cooled in the form of small flattish hemispheres, like crystallizations, the size of a kernel of corn (nuggets I called them as I picked them out from amid the berries). Loudon says, that "cultivated trees are said to yield more wax than those that are found wild."[1] If you get any pitch on your hands in the pine woods you have only to rub some of these berries between your hands to start it off. But the ocean was the grand fact there, which made us forget both bayberries and men.

[1] See Duplessy, *Végétaux Résineux*, vol. ii., p. 60.

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To-day the air was beautifully clear, and the sea no longer dark and stormy, though the waves still broke with foam along the beach, but sparkling and full of life. Already that morning I had seen the day break over the sea as if it came out of its bosom: —

> "The saffron-robed Dawn rose in haste from the streams
> Of Ocean, that she might bring light to immortals and to mortals."

The sun rose visibly at such a distance over the sea, that the cloud-bank in the horizon, which at first concealed him, was not perceptible until he had risen high behind it, and plainly broke and dispersed it, like an arrow. But as yet I looked at him as rising over land, and could not, without an effort, realize that he was rising over the sea. Already I saw some vessels on the horizon, which had rounded the Cape in the night, and were now well on their watery way to other lands.

We struck the beach again in the south part of Truro. In the early part of the day, while it was flood tide, and the beach was narrow and soft, we walked on the bank, which was very high here, but not so level as the day before, being more interrupted by slight hollows. The author of the "Description of the Eastern Coast" says of this part, that "the bank is very high and steep. From the edge of it, west, there is a strip of sand, a hundred yards in breadth. Then succeeds low brushwood, a quarter of a mile wide, and almost impassable. After which comes a thick, perplexing forest in which not a house is to be discovered. Seamen, therefore, though the distance between these two vallies [Newcomb's and Brush Hollows] is great, must

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not attempt to enter the wood, as in a snow storm they must undoubtedly perish." This is still a true description of the country, except that there is not much high wood left.

There were many vessels, like gulls, skimming over the surface of the sea, now half concealed in its troughs, their dolphin-strikers plowing the water, now tossed on the top of the billows. One, a barque standing down parallel with the coast, suddenly furled her sails, came to anchor, and swung round in the wind, near us, only half a mile from the shore. At first we thought that her captain wished to communicate with us, and perhaps we did not regard the signal of distress, which a mariner would have understood, and he cursed us for cold-hearted wreckers who turned our backs on him. For hours we could still see her anchored there behind us, and we wondered how she could afford to loiter so long in her course. Or was she a smuggler who had chosen that wild beach to land her cargo on? Or did they wish to catch fish, or paint their vessel? Ere long other barques, and brigs, and schooners, which had in the meanwhile doubled the Cape, sailed by her in the smacking breeze, and our consciences were relieved. Some of these vessels lagged behind, while others steadily went ahead. We narrowly watched their rig and the cut of their jibs, and how they walked the water, for there was all the difference between them that there is between living creatures. But we wondered that they should be remembering Boston and New York and Liverpool, steering for them, out there; as if the sailor might forget his peddling business on

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such a grand highway. They had perchance brought oranges from the Western Isles; and were they carrying back the peel? We might as well transport our old traps across the ocean of eternity. Is *that* but another "trading flood," with its blessed isles? Is Heaven such a harbor as the Liverpool docks?

Still held on without a break the inland barrens and shrubbery, the desert and the high sand-bank with its even slope, the broad white beach, the breakers, the green water on the bar, and the Atlantic Ocean; and we traversed with delight new reaches of the shore; we took another lesson in sea-horses' manes and sea-cows' tails, in sea-jellies and sea-clams, with our new-gained experience. The sea ran hardly less than the day before. It seemed with every wave to be subsiding, because such was our expectation, and yet when hours had elapsed we could see no difference. But there it was, balancing itself, the restless ocean by our side, lurching in its gait. Each wave left the sand all braided or woven, as it were with a coarse woof and warp, and a distinct raised edge to its rapid work. We made no haste, since we wished to see the ocean at our leisure, and indeed that soft sand was no place in which to be in a hurry, for one mile there was as good as two elsewhere. Besides, we were obliged frequently to empty our shoes of the sand which one took in in climbing or descending the bank.

As we were walking close to the water's edge this morning, we turned round, by chance, and saw a large black object which the waves had just cast up on the beach behind us, yet too far off for us to distinguish

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what it was; and when we were about to return to it, two men came running from the bank, where no human beings had appeared before, as if they had come out of the sand, in order to save it before another wave took it. As we approached, it took successively the form of a huge fish, a drowned man, a sail or a net, and finally of a mass of tow-cloth, part of the cargo of the Franklin, which the men loaded into a cart.

Objects on the beach, whether men or inanimate things, look not only exceedingly grotesque, but much larger and more wonderful than they actually are. Lately, when approaching the seashore several degrees south of this, I saw before me, seemingly half a mile distant, what appeared like bold and rugged cliffs on the beach, fifteen feet high, and whitened by the sun and waves; but after a few steps it proved to be low heaps of rags, — part of the cargo of a wrecked vessel, — scarcely more than a foot in height. Once also it was my business to go in search of the relics of a human body, mangled by sharks, which had just been cast up, a week after a wreck, having got the direction from a lighthouse: I should find it a mile or two distant over the sand, a dozen rods from the water, covered with a cloth, by a stick stuck up. I expected that I must look very narrowly to find so small an object, but the sandy beach, half a mile wide, and stretching farther than the eye could reach, was so perfectly smooth and bare, and the mirage toward the sea so magnifying, that when I was half a mile distant the insignificant sliver which marked the spot looked like a bleached spar, and the relics were as conspicuous as if they lay in state on

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that sandy plain, or a generation had labored to pile up their cairn there. Close at hand they were simply some bones with a little flesh adhering to them, in fact only a slight inequality in the sweep of the shore. There was nothing at all remarkable about them, and they were singularly inoffensive both to the senses and the imagination. But as I stood there they grew more and more imposing. They were alone with the beach and the sea, whose hollow roar seemed addressed to them, and I was impressed as if there was an understanding between them and the ocean which necessarily left me out, with my snivelling sympathies. That dead body had taken possession of the shore, and reigned over it as no living one could, in the name of a certain majesty which belonged to it.

We afterward saw many small pieces of tow-cloth washed up, and I learn that it continued to be found in good condition, even as late as November in that year, half a dozen bolts at a time.

We eagerly filled our pockets with the smooth round pebbles which in some places, even here, were thinly sprinkled over the sand, together with flat circular shells (*Scutellæ ?*); but, as we had read, when they were dry they had lost their beauty, and at each sitting we emptied our pockets again of the least remarkable, until our collection was well culled. Every material was rolled into the pebble form by the waves; not only stones of various kinds, but the hard coal which some vessel had dropped, bits of glass, and in one instance a mass of peat three feet long, where there was nothing like it to be seen for many miles. All the great rivers

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of the globe are annually, if not constantly, discharging great quantities of lumber, which drifts to distant shores. I have also seen very perfect pebbles of brick, and bars of Castile soap from a wreck rolled into perfect cylinders, and still spirally streaked with red, like a barber's pole. When a cargo of rags is washed ashore, every old pocket and bag-like recess will be filled to bursting with sand by being rolled on the beach; and on one occasion, the pockets in the clothing of the wrecked being thus puffed up, even after they had been ripped open by wreckers, deluded me into the hope of identifying them by the contents. A pair of gloves looked exactly as if filled by a hand. The water in such clothing is soon wrung out and evaporated, but the sand, which works itself into every seam, is not so easily got rid of. Sponges which are picked up on the shore, as is well known, retain some of the sand of the beach to the latest day, in spite of every effort to extract it.

I found one stone on the top of the bank, of a dark-gray color, shaped exactly like a giant clam (*Mactra solidissima*), and of the same size ; and, what was more remarkable, one half of the outside had shelled off and lay near it, of the same form and depth with one of the valves of this clam, while the other half was loose, leaving a solid core of a darker color within it. I afterward saw a stone resembling a razor clam, but it was a solid one. It appeared as if the stone, in the process of formation, had filled the mould which a clamshell furnished; or the same law that shaped the clam had made a clam of stone. Dead clams, with shells full of

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sand, are called sand clams. There were many of the large clamshells filled with sand; and sometimes one valve was separately filled exactly even, as if it had been heaped and then scraped. Even among the many small stones on the top of the bank, I found one arrowhead.

Beside the giant clam and barnacles, we found on the shore a small clam (*Mesodesma arctata*), which I dug with my hands in numbers on the bars, and which is sometimes eaten by the inhabitants, in the absence of the *Mya arenaria*, on this side. Most of their empty shells had been perforated by some foe. Also, the —

Astarte castanea.

The edible mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) on the few rocks, and washed up in curious bunches of forty or fifty, held together by its rope-like byssus.

The scallop shell (*Pecten concentricus*), used for card-racks and pin-cushions.

Cockles, or cuckoos (*Natica heros*), and their remarkable nidus, called "sand-circle," looking like the top of a stone jug without the stopple, and broken on one side, or like a flaring dickey made of sand-paper. Also, —

Cancellaria Couthouyi (?), and —

Periwinkles (?) (*Fusus decemcostatus*).

We afterward saw some other kinds on the Bay side. Gould states that this Cape "has hitherto proved a barrier to the migrations of many species of Mollusca." — "Of the one hundred and ninety-seven species [which he described in 1840 as belonging to Massachusetts], eighty-three do not pass to the South shore, and fifty are not found on the North shore of the Cape."

Among Crustacea there were the shells of crabs and

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Shells on the Beach

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lobsters, often bleached quite white high up the beach; sea or beach fleas (*Amphipoda*); and the cases of the horseshoe crab, or saucepan-fish (*Limulus Polyphemus*), of which we saw many alive on the Bay side, where they feed pigs on them. Their tails were used as arrow-heads by the Indians.

Of Radiata, there were the sea-chestnut or egg (*Echinus granulatus*), commonly divested of its spines; flat circular shells (*Scutella parma?*) covered with chocolate-colored spines, but becoming smooth and white, with five petal-like figures; a few starfishes or five-fingers (*Asterias rubens*); and sunfishes or sea-jellies (*Aureliæ*).

There was also at least one species of sponge.

The plants which I noticed here and there on the pure sandy shelf, between the ordinary high-water mark and the foot of the bank, were sea-rocket (*Cakile Americana*), saltwort (*Salsola kali*), sea sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*), sea burdock (*Xanthium echinatum*), seaside spurge (*Euphorbia polygonifolia*); also, beach-grass (*Arundo, Psamma,* or *Calamagrostis arenaria*), seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*), and the beach pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*).

Sometimes we helped a wrecker turn over a larger log than usual, or we amused ourselves with rolling stones down the bank, but we rarely could make one reach the water, the beach was so soft and wide; or we bathed in some shallow within a bar, where the sea covered us with sand at every flux, though it was quite cold and windy. The ocean there is commonly but a tantalizing prospect in hot weather, for with all that water before you, there is, as we were afterward told, no bathing on

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the Atlantic side, on account of the undertow and the rumor of sharks. At the lighthouse, both in Eastham and Truro, the only houses quite on the shore, they declared, the next year, that they would not bathe there "for any sum," for they sometimes saw the sharks tossed up and quiver for a moment on the sand. Others laughed at these stories, but perhaps they could afford to because they never bathed anywhere. One old wrecker told us that he killed a regular man-eating shark fourteen feet long, and hauled him out with his oxen, where we had bathed; and another, that his father caught a smaller one of the same kind that was stranded there, by standing him up on his snout so that the waves could not take him. They will tell you tough stories of sharks all over the Cape, which I do not presume to doubt utterly,—how they will sometimes upset a boat, or tear it in pieces, to get at the man in it. I can easily believe in the undertow, but I have no doubt that one shark in a dozen years is enough to keep up the reputation of a beach a hundred miles long. I should add, however, that in July we walked on the bank here a quarter of a mile parallel with a fish about six feet in length, possibly a shark, which was prowling slowly along within two rods of the shore. It was of a pale brown color, singularly film-like and indistinct in the water, as if all nature abetted this child of ocean, and showed many darker transverse bars or rings whenever it came to the surface. It is well known that different fishes even of the same species are colored by the water they inhabit. We saw it go into a little cove or bathing-tub, where we had just been bathing, where the water

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was only four or five feet deep at that time, and after exploring it go slowly out again; but we continued to bathe there, only observing first from the bank if the cove was preoccupied. We thought that the water was fuller of life, more aerated perhaps than that of the Bay, like soda-water, for we were as particular as young salmon, and the expectation of encountering a shark did not subtract anything from its life-giving qualities.

Sometimes we sat on the wet beach and watched the beach-birds, sandpipers, and others, trotting along close to each wave, and waiting for the sea to cast up their breakfast. The former (*Charadrius melodus*) ran with great rapidity, and then stood stock-still, remarkably erect, and hardly to be distinguished from the beach. The wet sand was covered with small skipping sea-fleas, which apparently made a part of their food. These last are the little scavengers of the beach, and are so numerous that they will devour large fishes which have been cast up, in a very short time. One little bird not larger than a sparrow — it may have been a phalarope — would alight on the turbulent surface where the breakers were five or six feet high, and float buoyantly there like a duck, cunningly taking to its wings and lifting itself a few feet through the air over the foaming crest of each breaker, but sometimes outriding safely a considerable billow which hid it some seconds, when its instinct told it that it would not break. It was a little creature thus to sport with the ocean, but it was as perfect a success in its way as the breakers in theirs. There was also an almost uninterrupted line of coots rising and falling with the waves,

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a few rods from the shore, the whole length of the Cape. They made as constant a part of the ocean's border as the pads or pickerel-weed do of that of a pond. We read the following as to the storm petrel (*Thalassidroma Wilsonii*), which is seen in the Bay as well as on the outside. "The feathers on the breast of the Storm Petrel are, like those of all swimming birds, water-proof; but substances not susceptible of being wetted with water are, for that very reason, the best fitted for collecting oil from its surface. That function is performed by the feathers on the breast of the Storm Petrels as they touch on the surface; and though that may not be the only way in which they procure their food, it is certainly that in which they obtain great part of it. They dash along till they have loaded their feathers and then they pause upon the waves and remove the oil with their bills."

Thus we kept on along the gently curving shore, seeing two or three miles ahead at once, — along this ocean sidewalk, where there was none to turn out for, with the middle of the road, the highway of nations, on our right, and the sand cliffs of the Cape on our left. We saw this forenoon a part of the wreck of a vessel, probably the Franklin, a large piece fifteen feet square, and still freshly painted. With a grapple and a line we could have saved it, for the waves repeatedly washed it within cast, but they as often took it back. It would have been a lucky haul for some poor wrecker, for I have been told that one man who paid three or four dollars for a part of the wreck of that vessel, sold fifty or sixty dollars' worth of iron out of it. Another, the

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same who picked up the captain's valise with the memorable letter in it, showed me, growing in his garden, many pear and plum trees which washed ashore from her, all nicely tied up and labeled, and he said that he might have got five hundred dollars' worth; for a Mr. Bell was importing the nucleus of a nursery to be established near Boston. His turnip-seed came from the same source. Also valuable spars from the same vessel and from the Cactus lay in his yard. In short the inhabitants visit the beach to see what they have caught as regularly as a fisherman his weir or a lumberer his boom; the Cape is their boom. I heard of one who had recently picked up twenty barrels of apples in good condition, probably a part of a deck load thrown over in a storm.

Though there are wreck-masters appointed to look after valuable property which must be advertised, yet undoubtedly a great deal of value is secretly carried off. But are we not all wreckers contriving that some treasure may be washed up on our beach, that we may secure it, and do we not infer the habits of these Nauset and Barnegat wreckers, from the common modes of getting a living?

The sea, vast and wild as it is, bears thus the waste and wrecks of human art to its remotest shore. There is no telling what it may not vomit up. It lets nothing lie; not even the giant clams which cling to its bottom. It is still heaving up the tow-cloth of the Franklin, and perhaps a piece of some old pirate's ship, wrecked more than a hundred years ago, comes ashore to-day. Some years since, when a vessel was wrecked here

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which had nutmegs in her cargo, they were strewn all along the beach, and for a considerable time were not spoiled by the salt water. Soon afterward, a fisherman caught a cod which was full of them. Why, then, might not the Spice-Islanders shake their nutmeg trees into the ocean, and let all nations who stand in need of them pick them up? However, after a year, I found that the nutmegs from the Franklin had become soft.

You might make a curious list of articles which fishes have swallowed, — sailors' open clasp-knives, and bright tin snuff-boxes, — not knowing what was in them, — and jugs, and jewels, and Jonah. The other day I came across the following scrap in a newspaper: —

"A Religious Fish. — A short time ago, mine host Stewart, of the Denton Hotel, purchased a rock-fish, weighing about sixty pounds. On opening it he found in it a certificate of membership of the M. E. Church, which we read as follows: —

Member

Methodist E. Church,
Founded A. D. 1784.

Quarterly Ticket. 18

Minister.

'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.' — 2 Cor. iv. 17.

'O what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host t' appear,
And worship at thy feet.'

"The paper was, of course, in a crumpled and wet condition, but on exposing it to the sun, and ironing the kinks out of it, it became quite legible. — *Denton (Md.) Journal.*"

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From time to time we saved a wreck ourselves, a box or barrel, and set it on its end, and appropriated it with crossed sticks; and it will lie there perhaps, respected by brother wreckers, until some more violent storm shall take it, really lost to man until wrecked again. We also saved, at the cost of wet feet only, a valuable cord and buoy, part of a seine, with which the sea was playing, for it seemed ungracious to refuse the least gift which so great a personage offered you. We brought this home and still use it for a garden line. I picked up a bottle half buried in the wet sand, covered with barnacles, but stoppled tight, and half full of red ale, which still smacked of juniper, — all that remained I fancied from the wreck of a rowdy world, — that great salt sea on the one hand, and this little sea of ale on the other, preserving their separate characters. What if it could tell us its adventures over countless ocean waves! Man would not be man through such ordeals as it had passed. But as I poured it slowly out on to the sand, it seemed to me that man himself was like a half-emptied bottle of pale ale, which Time had drunk so far, yet stoppled tight for a while, and drifting about in the ocean of circumstances, but destined ere-long to mingle with the surrounding waves, or be spilled amid the sands of a distant shore.

In the summer I saw two men fishing for bass hereabouts. Their bait was a bullfrog, or several small frogs in a bunch, for want of squid. They followed a retiring wave, and whirling their lines round and round their heads with increasing rapidity, threw them as far as they could into the sea; then retreating, sat down flat on the

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sand, and waited for a bite. It was literally (or *littorally*) walking down to the shore, and throwing your line into the Atlantic. I should not have known what might take hold of the other end, whether Proteus or another. At any rate, if you could not pull him in, why, you might let him go without being pulled in yourself. And *they* knew by experience that it would be a striped bass, or perhaps a cod, for these fishes play along near the shore.

From time to time we sat under the lee of a sand-hill on the bank, thinly covered with coarse beach-grass, and steadily gazed on the sea, or watched the vessels going south, all Blessings of the Bay of course. We could see a little more than half a circle of ocean, besides the glimpses of the Bay which we got behind us; the sea there was not wild and dreary in all respects, for there were frequently a hundred sail in sight at once on the Atlantic. You can commonly count about eighty in a favorable summer day, and pilots sometimes land and ascend the bank to look out for those which require their services. These had been waiting for fair weather, and had come out of Boston Harbor together. The same is the case when they have been assembled in the Vineyard Sound, so that you may see but few one day, and a large fleet the next. Schooners with many jibs and staysails crowded all the sea road; square-rigged vessels with their great height and breadth of canvas were ever and anon appearing out of the far horizon, or disappearing and sinking into it; here and there a pilot-boat was towing its little boat astern toward some distant foreigner who had just fired a gun, the echo of which along the shore sounded like the caving of the bank.

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We could see the pilot looking through his glass toward the distant ship which was putting back to speak with him. He sails many a mile to meet her; and now she puts her sails aback, and communicates with him alongside, — sends some important message to the owners, and then bids farewell to these shores for good and all; or, perchance a propeller passed and made fast to some disabled craft, or one that had been becalmed, whose cargo of fruit might spoil. Though silently, and for the most part incommunicatively, going about their business, they were, no doubt, a source of cheerfulness and a kind of society to one another.

To-day it was the Purple Sea, an epithet which I should not before have accepted. There were distinct patches of the color of a purple grape with the bloom rubbed off. But first and last the sea is of all colors. Well writes Gilpin concerning "the brilliant hues which are continually playing on the surface of a quiet ocean," and this was not too turbulent at a distance from the shore. "Beautiful," says he, "no doubt in a high degree are those glimmering tints which often invest the tops of mountains; but they are mere coruscations compared with these marine colors, which are continually varying and shifting into each other in all the vivid splendor of the rainbow, through the space often of several leagues." Commonly, in calm weather, for half a mile from the shore, where the bottom tinges it, the sea is green, or greenish, as are some ponds; then blue for many miles, often with purple tinges, bounded in the distance by a light, almost silvery stripe; beyond which there is generally a dark-blue rim, like a moun-

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tain ridge in the horizon, as if, like that, it owed its color to the intervening atmosphere. On another day, it will be marked with long streaks, alternately smooth and rippled, light-colored and dark, even like our inland meadows in a freshet, and showing which way the wind sets.

Thus we sat on the foaming shore, looking on the wine-colored ocean, —

Θίν' ἔφ' ἁλὸς πολιῆς, ὁρόων ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον.

Here and there was a darker spot on its surface, the shadow of a cloud, though the sky was so clear that no cloud would have been noticed otherwise, and no shadow would have been seen on the land, where a much smaller surface is visible at once. So, distant clouds and showers may be seen on all sides by a sailor in the course of a day, which do not necessarily portend rain where he is. In July we saw similar dark-blue patches where schools of menhaden rippled the surface, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows of clouds. Sometimes the sea was spotted with them far and wide, such is its inexhaustible fertility. Close at hand you see their back fin, which is very long and sharp, projecting two or three inches above water. From time to time also we saw the white bellies of the bass playing along the shore.

It was a poetic recreation to watch those distant sails steering for half-fabulous ports, whose very names are a mysterious music to our ears; Fayal, and Bab-el-Mandel, ay, and Chagres, and Panama, — bound to the famous Bay of San Francisco, and the golden streams

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of Sacramento and San Joaquin, to Feather River and the American Fork, where Sutter's Fort presides, and inland stands the City de los Angeles. It is remarkable that men do not sail the sea with more expectation. Nothing remarkable was ever accomplished in a prosaic mood. The heroes and discoverers have found true more than was previously believed, only when they were expecting and dreaming of something more than their contemporaries dreamed of, or even themselves discovered, that is, when they were in a frame of mind fitted to behold the truth. Referred to the world's standard, they are always insane. Even savages have indirectly surmised as much. Humboldt, speaking of Columbus approaching the New World, says: "The grateful coolness of the evening air, the ethereal purity of the starry firmament, the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to him by the land breeze, all led him to suppose (as we are told by Herrera, in the Decades) that he was approaching the garden of Eden, the sacred abode of our first parents. The Orinoco seemed to him one of the four rivers which, according to the venerable tradition of the ancient world, flowed from Paradise, to water and divide the surface of the earth, newly adorned with plants." So even the expeditions for the discovery of El Dorado, and of the Fountain of Youth, led to real, if not compensatory discoveries.

We discerned vessels so far off, when once we began to look, that only the tops of their masts in the horizon were visible, and it took a strong intention of the eye, and its most favorable side, to see them at all, and sometimes we doubted if we were not counting our eye-

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lashes. Charles Darwin states that he saw, from the base of the Andes, "the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although not less than twenty-six geographical miles distant," and that Anson had been surprised at the distance at which his vessels were discovered from the coast, without knowing the reason, namely, the great height of the land and the transparency of the air. Steamers may be detected much farther than sailing vessels, for, as one says, when their hulls and masts of wood and iron are down, their smoky masts and streamers still betray them; and the same writer, speaking of the comparative advantages of bituminous and anthracite coal for war-steamers, states that "from the ascent of the columns of smoke above the horizon, the motions of the steamers in Calais Harbor [on the coast of France] are at all times observable at Ramsgate [on the English coast], from the first lighting of the fires to the putting out at sea; and that in America the steamers burning the fat bituminous coal can be tracked at sea at least seventy miles before the hulls become visible, by the dense columns of black smoke pouring out of their chimneys, and trailing along the horizon."

Though there were numerous vessels at this great distance in the horizon on every side, yet the vast spaces between them, like the spaces between the stars, — far as they were distant from us, so were they from one another — nay, some were twice as far from each other as from us, — impressed us with a sense of the immensity of the ocean, the "unfruitful ocean," as it has been called, and we could see what proportion

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man and his works bear to the globe. As we looked off, and saw the water growing darker and darker and deeper and deeper the farther we looked, till it was awful to consider, and it appeared to have no relation to the friendly land, either as shore or bottom, — of what use is a bottom if it is out of sight, if it is two or three miles from the surface, and you are to be drowned so long before you get to it, though it were made of the same stuff with your native soil? — over that ocean where, as the Veda says, "there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to," I felt that I was a land animal. The man in a balloon even may commonly alight on the earth in a few moments, but the sailor's only hope is that he may reach the distant shore. I could then appreciate the heroism of the old navigator, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of whom it is related, that being overtaken by a storm when on his return from America, in the year 1583, far northeastward from where we were, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, just before he was swallowed up in the deep, he cried out to his comrades in the Hind, as they came within hearing, "We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land." I saw that it would not be easy to realize.

On Cape Cod the next most eastern land you hear of is St. George's Bank (the fishermen tell of "Georges," "Cashus," and other sunken lands which they frequent). Every Cape man has a theory about George's Bank having been an island once, and in their accounts they gradually reduce the shallowness from six, five, four, two fathoms, to somebody's confident assertion that he has seen a mackerel gull sitting on a piece

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of dry land there. It reminded me, when I thought of the shipwrecks which had taken place there, of the Isle of Demons, laid down off this coast in old charts of the New World. There must be something monstrous, methinks, in a vision of the sea bottom from over some bank a thousand miles from the shore, more awful than its imagined bottomlessness; a drowned continent, all livid and frothing at the nostrils, like the body of a drowned man, which is better sunk deep than near the surface.

I have been surprised to discover from a steamer the shallowness of Massachusetts Bay itself. Off Billingsgate Point I could have touched the bottom with a pole, and I plainly saw it variously shaded with seaweed, at five or six miles from the shore. This is "the Shoalground of the Cape," it is true, but elsewhere the Bay is not much deeper than a country pond. We are told that the deepest water in the English Channel between Shakespeare's Cliff and Cape Gris-Nèz, in France, is one hundred and eighty feet; and Guyot says that "the Baltic Sea has a depth of only one hundred and twenty feet between the coasts of Germany and those of Sweden," and "the Adriatic between Venice and Trieste has a depth of only one hundred and thirty feet." A pond in my native town, only half a mile long, is more than one hundred feet deep.

The ocean is but a larger lake. At midsummer you may sometimes see a strip of glassy smoothness on it, a fed rods in width and many miles long, as if the surface there were covered with a thin pellicle of oil, just

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as on a country pond; a sort of standstill, you would say, at the meeting or parting of two currents of air (if it does not rather mark the unrippled steadiness of a current of water beneath), for sailors tell of the ocean and land breeze meeting between the fore and aft sails of a vessel, while the latter are full, the former being suddenly taken aback. Daniel Webster, in one of his letters describing blue-fishing off Martha's Vineyard, referring to those smooth places, which fishermen and sailors call "slicks," says: "We met with them yesterday, and our boatman made for them, whenever discovered. He said they were caused by the blue-fish chopping up their prey. That is to say, those voracious fellows get into a school of menhaden, which are too large to swallow whole, and they bite them into pieces to suit their tastes. And the oil from this butchery, rising to the surface, makes the 'slick.'"

Yet this same placid ocean, as civil now as a city's harbor, a place for ships and commerce, will ere long be lashed into sudden fury, and all its caves and cliffs will resound with tumult. It will ruthlessly heave these vessels to and fro, break them in pieces in its sandy or stony jaws, and deliver their crews to sea-monsters. It will play with them like seaweed, distend them like dead frogs, and carry them about, now high, now low, to show to the fishes, giving them a nibble. This gentle ocean will toss and tear the rag of a man's body like the father of mad bulls, and his relatives may be seen seeking the remnants for weeks along the strand. From some quiet inland hamlet they have rushed weeping to the unheard-of shore, and now stand un-

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certain where a sailor has recently been buried amid the sand-hills.

It is generally supposed that they who have long been conversant with the ocean can foretell, by certain indications, such as its roar and the notes of sea-fowl, when it will change from calm to storm; but probably no such ancient mariner as we dream of exists; they know no more, at least, than the older sailors do about this voyage of life on which we are all embarked. Nevertheless, we love to hear the sayings of old sailors, and their accounts of natural phenomena which totally ignore, and are ignored by, science; and possibly they have not always looked over the gunwale so long in vain. Kalm repeats a story which was told him in Philadelphia by a Mr. Cock, who was one day sailing to the West Indies in a small yacht, with an old man on board who was well acquainted with those seas. "The old man sounding the depth, called to the mate to tell Mr. Cock to launch the boats immediately, and to put a sufficient number of men into them, in order to tow the yacht during the calm, that they might reach the island before them as soon as possible, as within twenty-four hours there would be a strong hurricane. Mr. Cock asked him what reasons he had to think so; the old man replied, that on sounding, he saw the lead in the water at a distance of many fathoms more than he had seen it before; that therefore the water was become clear all of a sudden, which he looked upon as a certain sign of an impending hurricane in the sea." The sequel of the story is that by good fortune, and by dint of rowing, they managed to gain a safe harbor

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before the hurricane had reached its height; but it finally raged with so much violence, that not only many ships were lost and houses unroofed, but even their own vessel in harbor was washed so far on shore that several weeks elapsed before it could be got off.

The Greeks would not have called the ocean ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, though it does not produce wheat, if they had viewed it by the light of modern science, for naturalists now assert that "the sea, and not the land, is the principal seat of life," — though not of vegetable life. Darwin affirms that "our most thickly inhabited forests appear almost as deserts when we come to compare them with the corresponding regions of the ocean." Agassiz and Gould tell us that "the sea teems with animals of all classes, far beyond the extreme point of flowering plants;" but they add that "experiments of dredging in very deep water have also taught us that the abyss of the ocean is nearly a desert;" — "so that modern investigations," to quote the words of Desor, "merely go to confirm the great idea which was vaguely anticipated by the ancient poets and philosophers, that the Ocean is the origin of all things." Yet marine animals and plants hold a lower rank in the scale of being than land animals and plants. "There is no instance known," says Desor, "of an animal becoming aquatic in its perfect state, after having lived in its lower stage on dry land," but as in the case of the tadpole, "the progress invariably points towards the dry land." In short, the dry land itself came through and out of the water in its way to the heavens, for, "in going back through the geological

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ages, we come to an epoch when, according to all appearances, the dry land did not exist, and when the surface of our globe was entirely covered with water." We looked on the sea, then, once more, not as ἀτρύγετος, or unfruitful, but as it has been more truly called, the "laboratory of continents."

Though we have indulged in some placid reflections of late, the reader must not forget that the dash and roar of the waves were incessant. Indeed, it would be well if he were to read with a large conch-shell at his ear. But notwithstanding that it was very cold and windy to-day, it was such cold as we thought would not cause one to take cold who was exposed to it, owing to the saltness of the air and the dryness of the soil. Yet the author of the old "Description of Wellfleet" says, "The atmosphere is very much impregnated with saline particles, which, perhaps, with the great use of fish, and the neglect of cider and spruce-beer, may be a reason why the people are more subject to sore mouths and throats than in other places."

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VII

ACROSS THE CAPE

WHEN we have returned from the seaside, we sometimes ask ourselves why we did not spend more time in gazing at the sea; but very soon the traveler does not look at the sea more than at the heavens. As for the interior, if the elevated sand-bar in the midst of the ocean can be said to have any interior, it was an exceedingly desolate landscape, with rarely a cultivated or cultivable field in sight. We saw no villages, and seldom a house, for these are generally on the Bay side. It was a succession of shrubby hills and valleys, now wearing an autumnal tint. You would frequently think, from the character of the surface, the dwarfish trees, and the bear-berries around, that you were on the top of a mountain. The only wood in Eastham was on the edge of Wellfleet. The pitch pines were not commonly more than fifteen or eighteen feet high. The larger ones were covered with lichens, — often hung with the long gray usnea. There is scarcely a white pine on the forearm of the Cape. Yet in the northwest part of Eastham, near the Camp-Ground, we saw, the next summer, some quite rural, and even sylvan retreats, — for the Cape, — where small rustling groves of oaks and locusts and whispering pines, on perfectly level ground, made a little paradise. The locusts, both transplanted and growing naturally about the houses

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there, appeared to flourish better than any other tree. There were thin belts of wood in Wellfleet and Truro, a mile or more from the Atlantic, but, for the most part, we could see the horizon through them, or, if extensive, the trees were not large. Both oaks and pines had often the same flat look with the apple trees. Commonly, the oak woods twenty-five years old were a mere scraggy shrubbery nine or ten feet high, and we could frequently reach to their topmost leaf. Much that is called "woods" was about half as high as this, — only patches of shrub oak, bayberry, beach plum, and wild roses, overrun with woodbine. When the roses were in bloom, these patches in the midst of the sand displayed such a profusion of blossoms, mingled with the aroma of the bayberry, that no Italian or other artificial rose garden could equal them. They were perfectly elysian, and realized my idea of an oasis in the desert. Huckleberry bushes were very abundant, and the next summer they bore a remarkable quantity of that kind of gall called huckleberry-apple, forming quite handsome though monstrous blossoms. But it must be added, that this shrubbery swarmed with wood ticks, sometimes very troublesome parasites, and which it takes very horny fingers to crack.

The inhabitants of these towns have a great regard for a tree, though their standard for one is necessarily neither large nor high; and when they tell you of the large trees that once grew here, you must think of them, not as absolutely large, but large compared with the present generation. Their "brave old oaks," of which they speak with so much respect, and which they will

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point out to you as relics of the primitive forest, one hundred or one hundred and fifty, ay, for aught they know, two hundred years old, have a ridiculously dwarfish appearance, which excites a smile in the beholder. The largest and most venerable which they will show you in such a case are, perhaps, not more than twenty or twenty-five feet high. I was especially amused by the Lilliputian old oaks in the south part of Truro. To the inexperienced eye, which appreciated their proportions only, they might appear vast as the tree which saved his royal majesty, but measured they were dwarfed at once almost into lichens which a deer might eat up in a morning. Yet they will tell you that large schooners were once built of timber which grew in Wellfleet. The old houses also are built of the timber of the Cape; but instead of the forests in the midst of which they originally stood, barren heaths, with poverty-grass for heather, now stretch away on every side. The modern houses are built of what is called "dimension timber," imported from Maine, all ready to be set up, so that commonly they do not touch it again with an axe. Almost all the wood used for fuel is *imported* by vessels or currents, and of course all the coal. I was told that probably a quarter of the fuel and a considerable part of the lumber used in North Truro was driftwood. Many get *all* their fuel from the beach.

Of birds not found in the interior of the State,—at least in my neighborhood,—I heard, in the summer, the black-throated bunting (*Fringilla Americana*) amid the shrubbery, and in the open land the upland plover (*Totanus Bartramius*), whose quivering notes were ever

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and anon prolonged into a clear, somewhat plaintive yet hawk-like scream, which sounded at a very indefinite distance. The bird may have been in the next field, though it sounded a mile off.

To-day we were walking through Truro, a town of about eighteen hundred inhabitants. We had already come to Pamet River, which empties into the Bay. This was the limit of the Pilgrims' journey up the Cape from Provincetown, when seeking a place for settlement. It rises in a hollow within a few rods of the Atlantic, and one who lives near its source told us that in high tides the sea leaked through, yet the wind and waves preserve intact the barrier between them, and thus the whole river is steadily driven westward butt end foremost, — fountain-head, channel, and lighthouse at the mouth, all together.

Early in the afternoon we reached the Highland Light, whose white tower we had seen rising out of the bank in front of us for the last mile or two. It is fourteen miles from the Nauset Lights, on what is called the Clay Pounds, an immense bed of clay abutting on the Atlantic, and, as the keeper told us, stretching quite across the Cape, which is here only about two miles wide. We perceived at once a difference in the soil, for there was an interruption of the desert, and a slight appearance of a sod under our feet, such as we had not seen for the last two days.

After arranging to lodge at the lighthouse, we rambled across the Cape to the Bay, over a singularly bleak and barren-looking country, consisting of rounded hills and hollows, called by geologists diluvial elevations

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and depressions, — a kind of scenery which has been compared to a chopped sea, though this suggests too sudden a transition. There is a delineation of this very landscape in Hitchcock's Report on the Geology of Massachusetts, a work which, by its size at least, reminds one of a diluvial elevation itself. Looking southward from the lighthouse, the Cape appeared like an elevated plateau, sloping very regularly, though slightly, downward from the edge of the bank on the Atlantic side, about one hundred and fifty feet above the ocean, to that on the Bay side. On traversing this we found it to be interrupted by broad valleys or gullies, which become the hollows in the bank when the sea has worn up to them. They are commonly at right angles with the shore, and often extend quite across the Cape. Some of the valleys, however, are circular, a hundred feet deep, without any outlet, as if the Cape had sunk in those places, or its sands had run out. The few scattered houses which we passed, being placed at the bottom of the hollows, for shelter and fertility, were, for the most part, concealed entirely, as much as if they had been swallowed up in the earth. Even a village with its meeting-house, which we had left little more than a stone's throw behind, had sunk in the earth, spire and all, and we saw only the surface of the upland and the sea on either hand. When approaching it, we had mistaken the belfry for a summer-house on the plain. We began to think that we might tumble into a village before we were aware of it, as into an ant-lion's hole, and be drawn into the sand irrecoverably. The most conspicuous objects on the land were a distant windmill, or a

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meeting-house standing alone, for only they could afford to occupy an exposed place. A great part of the township, however, is a barren, heath-like plain, and perhaps one third of it lies in common, though the property of individuals. The author of the old "Description of Truro," speaking of the soil, says, "The snow, which would be of essential service to it provided it lay level and covered the ground, is blown into drifts and into the sea." This peculiar open country, with here and there a patch of shrubbery, extends as much as seven miles, or from Pamet River on the south to High Head on the north, and from ocean to bay. To walk over it makes on a stranger such an impression as being at sea, and he finds it impossible to estimate distances in any weather. A windmill or a herd of cows may seem to be far away in the horizon, yet, after going a few rods, he will be close upon them. He is also deluded by other kinds of mirage. When, in the summer, I saw a family a-blueberrying a mile off, walking about amid the dwarfish bushes which did not come up higher than their ankles, they seemed to me to be a race of giants, twenty feet high at least.

The highest and sandiest portion next the Atlantic was thinly covered with beach-grass and indigo-weed. Next to this the surface of the upland generally consisted of white sand and gravel, like coarse salt, through which a scanty vegetation found its way up. It will give an ornithologist some idea of its barrenness if I mention that the next June, the month of grass, I found a nighthawk's eggs there, and that almost any square rod thereabouts, taken at random, would be an eligible

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site for such a deposit. The kildeer plover, which loves a similar locality, also drops its eggs there, and fills the air above with its din. This upland also produced cladonia lichens, poverty-grass, savory-leaved aster (*Diplopappus linariifolius*), mouse-ear, bear-berry, etc. On a few hillsides the savory-leaved aster and mouse-ear alone made quite a dense sward, said to be very pretty when the aster is in bloom. In some parts the two species of poverty-grass (*Hudsonia tomentosa* and *ericoides*), which deserve a better name, reign for miles in little hemispherical tufts or islets, like moss, scattered over the waste. They linger in bloom there till the middle of July. Occasionally near the beach these rounded beds, as also those of the sea sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*), were filled with sand within an inch of their tops, and were hard, like large ant-hills, while the surrounding sand was soft. In summer, if the poverty-grass grows at the head of a Hollow looking toward the sea, in a bleak position where the wind rushes up, the northern or exposed half of the tuft is sometimes all black and dead like an oven-broom, while the opposite half is yellow with blossoms, the whole hillside thus presenting a remarkable contrast when seen from the poverty-stricken and the flourishing side. This plant, which in many places would be esteemed an ornament, is here despised by many on account of its being associated with barrenness. It might well be adopted for the Barnstable coat-of-arms, in a field *sableux*. I should be proud of it. Here and there were tracts of beach-grass mingled with the seaside goldenrod and beach pea, which reminded us still more forcibly of the ocean.

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We read that there was not a brook in Truro. Yet there were deer here once, which must often have panted in vain; but I am pretty sure that I afterward saw a small fresh-water brook emptying into the south side of Pamet River, though I was so heedless as not to taste it. At any rate, a little boy near by told me that he drank at it. There was not a tree as far as we could see, and that was many miles each way, the general level of the upland being about the same everywhere. Even from the Atlantic side we overlooked the Bay, and saw to Manomet Point in Plymouth, and better from that side because it was the highest. The almost universal bareness and smoothness of the landscape were as agreeable as novel, making it so much the more like the deck of a vessel. We saw vessels sailing south into the Bay, on the one hand, and north along the Atlantic shore, on the other, all with an aft wind.

The single road which runs lengthwise the Cape, now winding over the plain, now through the shrubbery, which scrapes the wheels of the stage, was a mere cart-track in the sand, commonly without any fences to confine it, and continually changing from this side to that, to harder ground, or sometimes to avoid the tide. But the inhabitants travel the waste here and there pilgrim-wise and staff in hand, by narrow footpaths, through which the sand flows out and reveals the nakedness of the land. We shuddered at the thought of living there and taking our afternoon walks over those barren swells, where we could overlook every step of our walk before taking it, and would have to

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pray for a fog or a snow-storm to conceal our destiny. The walker there must soon eat his heart.

In the north part of the town there is no house from shore to shore for several miles, and it is as wild and solitary as the Western Prairies — used to be. Indeed, one who has seen every house in Truro, will be surprised to hear of the number of the inhabitants, but perhaps five hundred of the men and boys of this small town were then abroad on their fishing-grounds. Only a few men stay at home to till the sand or watch for blackfish. The farmers are fishermen-farmers and understand better plowing the sea than the land. They do not disturb their sands much, though there is a plenty of seaweed in the creeks, to say nothing of blackfish occasionally rotting on the shore. Between the Pond and East Harbor Village there was an interesting plantation of pitch pines, twenty or thirty acres in extent, like those which we had already seen from the stage. One who lived near said that the land was purchased by two men for a shilling or twenty-five cents an acre. Some is not considered worth writing a deed for. This soil or sand, which was partially covered with poverty and beach grass, sorrel, etc., was furrowed at intervals of about four feet and the seed dropped by a machine. The pines had come up admirably and grown the first year three or four inches, and the second six inches and more. Where the seed had been lately planted the white sand was freshly exposed in an endless furrow winding round and round the sides of the deep hollows in a vortical, spiral manner, which produced a very singular effect, as if you

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were looking into the reverse side of a vast banded shield. This experiment, so important to the Cape, appeared very successful, and perhaps the time will come when the greater part of this kind of land in Barnstable County will be thus covered with an artificial pine forest, as has been done in some parts of France. In that country 12,500 acres of downs had been thus covered in 1811 near Bayonne. They are called *pignadas*, and according to Loudon "constitute the principal riches of the inhabitants, where there was a drifting desert before." It seemed a nobler kind of grain to raise than corn even.

A few years ago Truro was remarkable among the Cape towns for the number of sheep raised in it; but I was told that at this time only two men kept sheep in the town, and in 1855, a Truro boy ten years old told me that he had never seen one. They were formerly pastured on the unfenced lands or general fields, but now the owners were more particular to assert their rights, and it cost too much for fencing. The rails are cedar from Maine, and two rails will answer for ordinary purposes, but four are required for sheep. This was the reason assigned by one who had formerly kept them for not keeping them any longer. Fencing-stuff is so expensive that I saw fences made with only one rail, and very often the rail when split was carefully tied with a string. In one of the villages I saw the next summer a cow tethered by a rope six rods long, the rope long in proportion as the feed was short and thin. Sixty rods, ay, all the cables of the Cape, would have been no more than fair. Tethered in the desert for

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fear that she would get into Arabia Felix! I helped a man weigh a bundle of hay which he was selling to his neighbor, holding one end of a pole from which it swung by a steelyard hook, and this was just half his whole crop. In short, the country looked so barren that I several times refrained from asking the inhabitants for a string or a piece of wrapping-paper, for fear I should rob them, for they plainly were obliged to import these things as well as rails, and where there were no news-boys, I did not see what they would do for waste paper.

The objects around us, the makeshifts of fishermen ashore, often made us look down to see if we were standing on terra firma. In the wells everywhere a block and tackle were used to raise the bucket, instead of a windlass, and by almost every house was laid up a spar or a plank or two full of auger-holes, saved from a wreck. The windmills were partly built of these, and they were worked into the public bridges. The lighthouse-keeper, who was having his barn shingled, told me casually that he had made three thousand good shingles for that purpose out of a mast. You would sometimes see an old oar used for a rail. Frequently also some fair-weather finery ripped off a vessel by a storm near the coast was nailed up against an outhouse. I saw fastened to a shed near the lighthouse a long new sign with the words "ANGLO SAXON" on it in large gilt letters, as if it were a useless part which the ship could afford to lose, or which the sailors had discharged at the same time with the pilot. But it interested somewhat as if it had been a part

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of the Argo, clipped off in passing through the Symplegades.

To the fisherman, the Cape itself is a sort of storeship laden with supplies, — a safer and larger craft which carries the women and children, the old men and the sick, and indeed sea phrases are as common on it as on board a vessel. Thus is it ever with a seagoing people. The old Northmen used to speak of the "keel-ridge" of the country, that is, the ridge of the Doffrafield Mountains, as if the land were a boat turned bottom up. I was frequently reminded of the Northmen here. The inhabitants of the Cape are often at once farmers and sea-rovers; they are more than vikings or kings of the bays, for their sway extends over the open sea also. A farmer in Wellfleet, at whose house I afterward spent a night, who had raised fifty bushels of potatoes the previous year, which is a large crop for the Cape, and had extensive salt-works, pointed to his schooner, which lay in sight, in which he and his man and boy occasionally ran down the coast a-trading as far as the Capes of Virginia. This was his market-cart, and his hired man knew how to steer her. Thus he drove two teams afield,

> "ere the high *seas* appeared
> Under the opening eyelids of the morn."

Though probably he would not hear much of the "gray-fly" on his way to Virginia.

A great proportion of the inhabitants of the Cape are always thus abroad about their teaming on some ocean highway or other, and the history of one of their ordinary trips would cast the Argonautic expe-

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dition into the shade. I have just heard of a Cape Cod captain who was expected home in the beginning of the winter from the West Indies, but was long since given up for lost, till his relations at length have heard with joy, that, after getting within forty miles of Cape Cod light, he was driven back by nine successive gales to Key West, between Florida and Cuba, and was once again shaping his course for home. Thus he spent his winter. In ancient times the adventures of these two or three men and boys would have been made the basis of a myth, but now such tales are crowded into a line of shorthand signs, like an algebraic formula in the shipping news. "Wherever over the world," said Palfrey in his oration at Barnstable, "you see the stars and stripes floating, you may have good hope that beneath them some one will be found who can tell you the soundings of Barnstable, or Wellfleet, or Chatham Harbor."

I passed by the home of somebody's (or everybody's) Uncle Bill, one day over on the Plymouth shore. It was a schooner half keeled up on the mud; we aroused the master out of a sound sleep at noonday, by thumping on the bottom of his vessel till he presented himself at the hatchway, for we wanted to borrow his clam-digger. Meaning to make him a call, I looked out the next morning, and lo! he had run over to "the Pines" the evening before, fearing an easterly storm. He outrode the *great* gale in the spring of 1851, dashing about alone in Plymouth Bay. He goes after rockweed, lighters vessels, and saves wrecks. I still saw him lying in the mud over at "the Pines"

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in the horizon, which place he could not leave if he would, till flood tide. But he would not then probably. This waiting for the tide is a singular feature in life by the seashore. A frequent answer is, "Well! you can't start for two hours yet." It is something new to a landsman, and at first he is not disposed to wait. History says that "two inhabitants of Truro were the first who adventured to the Falkland Isles in pursuit of whales. This voyage was undertaken in the year 1774, by the advice of Admiral Montague of the British navy, and was crowned with success."

At the Pond Village we saw a pond three eighths of a mile long densely filled with cat-tail flags, seven feet high, — enough for all the coopers in New England.

The western shore was nearly as sandy as the eastern, but the water was much smoother, and the bottom was partially covered with the slender grass-like seaweed (*Zostera*), which we had not seen on the Atlantic side; there were also a few rude sheds for trying fish on the beach there, which made it appear less wild. In the few marshes on this side we afterwards saw samphire, rosemary, and other plants new to us inlanders.

In the summer and fall sometimes, hundreds of blackfish (the social whale, *Globicephalus melas* of De Kay; called also black whale-fish, howling whale, bottle-head, etc.), fifteen feet or more in length, are driven ashore in a single school here. I witnessed such a scene in July, 1855. A carpenter who was working at the lighthouse, arriving early in the morning, remarked that he did not know but he had lost fifty dollars by coming to his work; for as he came along the

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Bay side he heard them driving a school of blackfish ashore, and he had debated with himself whether he should not go and join them and take his share, but had concluded to come to his work. After breakfast I came over to this place, about two miles distant, and near the beach met some of the fishermen returning from their chase. Looking up and down the shore, I could see about a mile south some large black masses on the sand, which I knew must be blackfish, and a man or two about them. As I walked along towards them I soon came to a large carcass whose head was gone and whose blubber had been stripped off some weeks before; the tide was just beginning to move it, and the stench compelled me to go a long way round. When I came to Great Hollow I found a fisherman and some boys on the watch, and counted about thirty blackfish, just killed, with many lance wounds, and the water was more or less bloody around. They were partly on shore and partly in the water, held by a rope round their tails till the tide should leave them. A boat had been somewhat stove by the tail of one. They were a smooth, shining black, like india-rubber, and had remarkably simple and lumpish forms for animated creatures, with a blunt, round snout or head, whale-like, and simple, stiff-looking flippers. The largest were about fifteen feet long, but one or two were only five feet long, and still without teeth. The fisherman slashed one with his jack-knife, to show me how thick the blubber was, — about three inches; and as I passed my finger through the cut it was covered thick with oil. The blubber looked like pork, and this man said that

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when they were trying it the boys would sometimes come round with a piece of bread in one hand, and take a piece of blubber in the other to eat with it, preferring it to pork scraps. He also cut into the flesh beneath, which was firm and red like beef, and he said that for his part he preferred it when fresh to beef. It is stated that in 1812 blackfish were used as food by the poor of Bretagne. They were waiting for the tide to leave these fishes high and dry, that they might strip off the blubber and carry it to their try-works in their boats, where they try it on the beach. They get commonly a barrel of oil, worth fifteen or twenty dollars, to a fish. There were many lances and harpoons in the boats, — much slenderer instruments than I had expected. An old man came along the beach with a horse and wagon distributing the dinners of the fishermen, which their wives had put up in little pails and jugs, and which he had collected in the Pond Village, and for this service, I suppose, he received a share of the oil. If one could not tell his own pail, he took the first he came to.

As I stood there they raised the cry of "another school," and we could see their black backs and their blowing about a mile northward, as they went leaping over the sea like horses. Some boats were already in pursuit there, driving them toward the beach. Other fishermen and boys running up began to jump into the boats and push them off from where I stood, and I might have gone too had I chosen. Soon there were twenty-five or thirty boats in pursuit, some large ones under sail, and others rowing with might and main,

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keeping outside of the school, those nearest to the fishes striking on the sides of their boats and blowing horns to drive them on to the beach. It was an exciting race. If they succeed in driving them ashore each boat takes one share, and then each man, but if they are compelled to strike them off shore each boat's company take what they strike. I walked rapidly along the shore toward the north, while the fishermen were rowing still more swiftly to join their companions, and a little boy who walked by my side was congratulating himself that his father's boat was beating another one. An old blind fisherman whom we met, inquired, "Where are they, I can't see. Have they got them?" In the meanwhile the fishes had turned and were escaping northward toward Provincetown, only occasionally the back of one being seen. So the nearest crews were compelled to strike them, and we saw several boats soon made fast, each to its fish, which, four or five rods ahead, was drawing it like a race-horse straight toward the beach, leaping half out of water, blowing blood and water from its hole, and leaving a streak of foam behind. But they went ashore too far north for us, though we could see the fishermen leap out and lance them on the sand. It was just like pictures of whaling which I have seen, and a fisherman told me that it was nearly as dangerous. In his first trial he had been much excited, and in his haste had used a lance with its scabbard on, but nevertheless had thrust it quite through his fish.

I learned that a few days before this one hundred and eighty blackfish had been driven ashore in one school at Eastham, a little farther south, and that the keeper

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of Billingsgate Point light went out one morning about the same time and cut his initials on the backs of a large school which had run ashore in the night, and sold his right to them to Provincetown for one thousand dollars, and probably Provincetown made as much more. Another fisherman told me that nineteen years ago three hundred and eighty were driven ashore in one school at Great Hollow. In the Naturalists' Library, it is said that, in the winter of 1809–10, one thousand one hundred and ten "approached the shore of Hvalfiord, Iceland, and were captured." De Kay says it is not known why they are stranded. But one fisherman declared to me that they ran ashore in pursuit of squid, and that they generally came on the coast about the last of July.

About a week afterward, when I came to this shore, it was strewn, as far as I could see with a glass, with the carcasses of blackfish stripped of their blubber and their heads cut off; the latter lying higher up. Walking on the beach was out of the question on account of the stench. Between Provincetown and Truro they lay in the very path of the stage. Yet no steps were taken to abate the nuisance, and men were catching lobsters as usual just off the shore. I was told that they did sometimes tow them out and sink them; yet I wondered where they got the stones to sink them with. Of course they might be made into guano, and Cape Cod is not so fertile that her inhabitants can afford to do without this manure, — to say nothing of the diseases they may produce.

After my return home, wishing to learn what was

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known about the blackfish, I had recourse to the reports of the zoölogical surveys of the State, and I found that Storer had rightfully omitted it in his Report on the Fishes, since it is not a fish; so I turned to Emmons's Report of the Mammalia, but was surprised to find that the seals and whales were omitted by him because he had had no opportunity to observe them. Considering how this State has risen and thriven by its fisheries, — that the legislature which authorized the Zoölogical Survey sat under the emblem of a codfish, — that Nantucket and New Bedford are within our limits, — that an early riser may find a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars' worth of blackfish on the shore in a morning, — that the Pilgrims saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish on the shore at Eastham, and called a part of that shore "Grampus Bay," from the number of blackfish they found there, before they got to Plymouth, — and that from that time to this these fishes have continued to enrich one or two counties almost annually, and that their decaying carcasses were now poisoning the air of one county for more than thirty miles, — I thought it remarkable that neither the popular nor scientific name was to be found in a report on our mammalia, — a *catalogue* of the productions of our land and water.

We had here, as well as all across the Cape, a fair view of Provincetown, five or six miles distant over the water toward the west, under its shrubby sand-hills, with its harbor now full of vessels, whose masts mingled with the spires of its churches, and gave it the appearance of a quite large seaport town.

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The inhabitants of all the lower Cape towns enjoy thus the prospect of two seas. Standing on the western or larboard shore, and looking across to where the distant mainland looms, they can say, This is Massachusetts Bay; and then, after an hour's sauntering walk, they may stand on the starboard side, beyond which no land is seen to loom, and say, This is the Atlantic Ocean.

On our way back to the lighthouse, by whose whitewashed tower we steered as securely as the mariner by its light at night, we passed through a graveyard, which apparently was saved from being blown away by its slates, for they had enabled a thick bed of huckleberry bushes to root themselves amid the graves. We thought it would be worth the while to read the epitaphs where so many were lost at sea; however, as not only their lives, but commonly their bodies also, were lost or not identified, there were fewer epitaphs of this sort than we expected, though there were not a few. Their graveyard is the ocean. Near the eastern side we started up a fox in a hollow, the only kind of wild quadruped, if I except a skunk in a salt marsh, that we saw in all our walk (unless painted and box tortoises may be called quadrupeds). He was a large, plump, shaggy fellow, like a yellow dog, with, as usual, a white tip to his tail, and looked as if he had fared well on the Cape. He cantered away into the shrub oaks and bayberry bushes which chanced to grow there, but were hardly high enough to conceal him. I saw another the next summer leaping over the top of a beach plum a little farther north, a small arc of his course (which I

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trust is not yet run), from which I endeavored in vain to calculate his whole orbit; there were too many unknown attractions to be allowed for. I also saw the exuviæ of a third fast sinking into the sand, and added the skull to my collection. Hence, I concluded that they must be plenty thereabouts; but a traveler may meet with more than an inhabitant, since he is more likely to take an unfrequented route across the country. They told me that in some years they died off in great numbers by a kind of madness, under the effect of which they were seen whirling round and round as if in pursuit of their tails. In Crantz's account of Greenland, he says, "They [the foxes] live upon birds and their eggs, and, when they can't get them, upon crowberries, mussels, crabs, and what the sea casts up."

Just before reaching the lighthouse, we saw the sun set in the Bay, — for standing on that narrow cape was, as I have said, like being on the deck of a vessel, or rather at the masthead of a man-of-war, thirty miles at sea, though we knew that at the same moment the sun was setting behind our native hills, which were just below the horizon in that direction. This sight drove everything else quite out of our heads, and Homer and the Ocean came in again with a rush, —

Ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' Ὠκεανῷ λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο,

the shining torch of the sun fell into the ocean.

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VIII

THE HIGHLAND LIGHT

This lighthouse, known to mariners as the Cape Cod or Highland Light, is one of our "primary sea-coast lights," and is usually the first seen by those approaching the entrance of Massachusetts Bay from Europe. It is forty-three miles from Cape Ann Light, and forty-one from Boston Light. It stands about twenty rods from the edge of the bank, which is here formed of clay. I borrowed the plane and square, level and dividers, of a carpenter who was shingling a barn near by, and, using one of those shingles made of a mast, contrived a rude sort of quadrant, with pins for sights and pivots, and got the angle of elevation of the Bank opposite the lighthouse, and with a couple of cod-lines the length of its slope, and so measured its height on the shingle. It rises one hundred and ten feet above its immediate base, or about one hundred and twenty-three feet above mean low water. Graham, who has carefully surveyed the extremity of the Cape, makes it one hundred and thirty feet. The mixed sand and clay lay at an angle of forty degrees with the horizon, where I measured it, but the clay is generally much steeper. No cow nor hen ever gets down it. Half a mile farther south the bank is fifteen or twenty-five feet higher, and that appeared to be the highest land in North Truro. Even this vast clay bank is fast wearing away. Small

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streams of water trickling down it at intervals of two or three rods have left the intermediate clay in the form of steep Gothic roofs fifty feet high or more, the ridges as sharp and rugged-looking as rocks; and in one place the bank is curiously eaten out in the form of a large semicircular crater.

According to the lighthouse-keeper, the Cape is wasting here on both sides, though most on the eastern. In some places it has lost many rods within the last year, and, ere long, the lighthouse must be moved. We calculated, *from his data*, how soon the Cape would be quite worn away at this point, "for," said he, "I can remember sixty years back." We were even more surprised at this last announcement — that is, at the slow waste of life and energy in our informant, for we had taken him to be not more than forty — than at the rapid wasting of the Cape, and we thought that he stood a fair chance to outlive the former.

Between this October and June of the next year, I found that the bank had lost about forty feet in one place, opposite the lighthouse, and it was cracked more than forty feet farther from the edge at the last date, the shore being strewn with the recent rubbish. But I judged that generally it was not wearing away here at the rate of more than six feet annually. Any conclusions drawn from the observations of a few years, or one generation only, are likely to prove false, and the Cape may balk expectation by its durability. In some places even a wrecker's foot-path down the bank lasts several years. One old inhabitant told us that when the lighthouse was built, in 1798, it was calcu-

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lated that it would stand forty-five years, allowing the bank to waste one length of fence each year, "but," said he, "there it is" (or rather another near the same site, about twenty rods from the edge of the bank).

The sea is not gaining on the Cape everywhere, for one man told me of a vessel wrecked long ago on the north of Provincetown whose "*bones*" (this was his word) are still visible many rods within the present line of the beach, half buried in sand. Perchance they lie alongside the *timbers* of a whale. The general statement of the inhabitants is, that the Cape is wasting on both sides, but extending itself on particular points on the south and west, as at Chatham and Monomoy Beaches, and at Billingsgate, Long, and Race Points. James Freeman stated in his day that above three miles had been added to Monomoy Beach during the previous fifty years, and it is said to be still extending as fast as ever. A writer in the *Massachusetts Magazine*, in the last century, tells us that "when the English first settled upon the Cape, there was an island off Chatham, at three leagues' distance, called Webb's Island, containing twenty acres, covered with red-cedar or savin. The inhabitants of Nantucket used to carry wood from it;" but he adds that in his day a large rock alone marked the spot, and the water was six fathoms deep there. The entrance to Nauset Harbor, which was once in Eastham, has now traveled south into Orleans. The islands in Wellfleet Harbor once formed a continuous beach, though now small vessels pass between them. And so of many other parts of this coast.

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Perhaps what the ocean takes from one part of the Cape it gives to another, — robs Peter to pay Paul. On the eastern side the sea appears to be everywhere encroaching on the land. Not only the land is undermined, and its ruins carried off by currents, but the sand is blown from the beach directly up the steep bank, where it is one hundred and fifty feet high, and covers the original surface there many feet deep. If you sit on the edge you will have ocular demonstration of this by soon getting your eyes full. Thus the bank preserves its height as fast as it is worn away. This sand is steadily traveling westward at a rapid rate, "more than a hundred yards," says one writer, within the memory of inhabitants now living; so that in some places peat-meadows are buried deep under the sand, and the peat is cut through it; and in one place a large peat-meadow has made its appearance on the shore in the bank covered many feet deep, and peat has been cut there. This accounts for that great pebble of peat which we saw in the surf. The old oysterman had told us that many years ago he lost a "crittur" by her being mired in a swamp near the Atlantic side east of his house, and twenty years ago he lost the swamp itself entirely, but has since seen signs of it appearing on the beach. He also said that he had seen cedar stumps "as big as cart-wheels" (!) on the bottom of the Bay, three miles off Billingsgate Point, when leaning over the side of his boat in pleasant weather, and that that was dry land not long ago. Another told us that a log canoe known to have been buried many years before on the Bay side at East Harbor in Truro, where the Cape is

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extremely narrow, appeared at length on the Atlantic side, the Cape having rolled over it, and an old woman said, "Now, you see, it is true what I told you, that the Cape is moving."

The bars along the coast shift with every storm, and in many places there is occasionally none at all. We ourselves observed the effect of a single storm with a high tide in the night, in July, 1855. It moved the sand on the beach opposite the lighthouse to the depth of six feet, and three rods in width as far as we could see north and south, and carried it bodily off no one knows exactly where, laying bare in one place a large rock five feet high which was invisible before, and narrowing the beach to that extent. There is usually, as I have said, no bathing on the back side of the Cape, on account of the undertow, but when we were there last, the sea had, three months before, cast up a bar near this lighthouse, two miles long and ten rods wide, over which the tide did not flow, leaving a narrow cove, then a quarter of a mile long, between it and the shore, which afforded excellent bathing. This cove had from time to time been closed up as the bar traveled northward, in one instance imprisoning four or five hundred whiting and cod, which died there, and the water as often turned fresh and finally gave place to sand. This bar, the inhabitants assured us, might be wholly removed, and the water six feet deep there in two or three days.

The lighthouse-keeper said that when the wind blowed strong on to the shore, the waves ate fast into the bank, but when it blowed off they took no sand away; for in the former case the wind heaped up the

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surface of the water next to the beach, and to preserve its equilibrium a strong undertow immediately set back again into the sea which carried with it the sand and whatever else was in the way, and left the beach hard to walk on; but in the latter case the undertow set on, and carried the sand with it, so that it was particularly difficult for shipwrecked men to get to land when the wind blowed on to the shore, but easier when it blowed off. This undertow, meeting the next surface wave on the bar which itself has made, forms part of the dam over which the latter breaks, as over an upright wall. The sea thus plays with the land, holding a sand-bar in its mouth awhile before it swallows it, as a cat plays with a mouse; but the fatal gripe is sure to come at last. The sea sends its rapacious east wind to rob the land, but before the former has got far with its prey, the land sends its honest west wind to recover some of its own. But, according to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined, not by winds and waves, but by tides.

Our host said that you would be surprised if you were on the beach when the wind blew a hurricane directly on to it, to see that none of the driftwood came ashore, but all was carried directly northward and parallel with the shore as fast as a man can walk, by the inshore current, which sets strongly in that direction at flood tide. The strongest swimmers also are carried along with it, and never gain an inch toward the beach. Even a large rock has been moved half a mile northward along the beach. He assured us that

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the sea was never still on the back side of the Cape, but ran commonly as high as your head, so that a great part of the time you could not launch a boat there, and even in the calmest weather the waves run six or eight feet up the beach, though then you could get off on a plank. Champlain and Poutrincourt could not land here in 1606, on account of the swell (*la houlle*), yet the savages came off to them in a canoe. In the Sieur de la Borde's "Relation des Caraibes," my edition of which was published at Amsterdam in 1711, at page 530 he says: —

"Couroumon, a Caraibe, also a star [*i. e.* a god], makes the great *lames à la mer*, and overturns canoes. *Lames à la mer* are the long *vagues* which are not broken (*entrecoupées*), and such as one sees come to land all in one piece, from one end of a beach to another, so that, however little wind there may be, a shallop or a canoe could hardly land (*aborder terre*) without turning over, or being filled with water."

But on the Bay side the water even at its edge is often as smooth and still as in a pond. Commonly there are no boats used along this beach. There was a boat belonging to the Highland Light which the next keeper after he had been there a year had not launched, though he said that there was good fishing just off the shore. Generally the life-boats cannot be used when needed. When the waves run very high it is impossible to get a boat off, however skillfully you steer it, for it will often be completely covered by the curving edge of the approaching breaker as by an arch, and so filled with water, or it will be lifted up by its bows, turned

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directly over backwards and all the contents spilled out. A spar thirty feet long is served in the same way.

I heard of a party who went off fishing back of Wellfleet some years ago, in two boats, in calm weather, who, when they had laden their boats with fish, and approached the land again, found such a swell breaking on it, though there was no wind, that they were afraid to enter it. At first they thought to pull for Provincetown, but night was coming on, and that was many miles distant. Their case seemed a desperate one. As often as they approached the shore and saw the terrible breakers that intervened, they were deterred; in short, they were thoroughly frightened. Finally, having thrown their fish overboard, those in one boat chose a favorable opportunity, and succeeded, by skill and good luck, in reaching the land, but they were unwilling to take the responsibility of telling the others when to come in, and as the other helmsman was inexperienced, their boat was swamped at once, yet all managed to save themselves.

Much smaller waves soon make a boat "nail-sick," as the phrase is. The keeper said that after a long and strong blow there would be three large waves, each successively larger than the last, and then no large ones for some time, and that, when they wished to land in a boat, they came in on the last and largest wave. Sir Thomas Browne (as quoted in Brand's "Popular Antiquities," vol. iii, p. 372), on the subject of the tenth wave being "greater or more dangerous than any other," after quoting Ovid, —

> "Qui venit hic fluctus, fluctus supereminet omnes
> Posterior nono est, undecimoque prior," —

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says, "Which, notwithstanding, is evidently false; nor can it be made out by observation either upon the shore or the ocean, as we have with diligence explored in both. And surely in vain we expect regularity in the waves of the sea, or in the particular motions thereof, as we may in its general reciprocations, whose causes are constant, and effects therefore correspondent; whereas its fluctuations are but motions subservient, which winds, storms, shores, shelves, and every interjacency irregulates."

We read that the Clay Pounds were so called, "because vessels have had the misfortune to be pounded against it in gales of wind," which we regard as a doubtful derivation. There are small ponds here, upheld by the clay, which were formerly called the Clay Pits. Perhaps this, or Clay Ponds, is the origin of the name. Water is found in the clay quite near the surface; but we heard of one man who had sunk a well in the sand close by, "till he could see stars at noonday," without finding any. Over this bare Highland the wind has full sweep. Even in July it blows the wings over the heads of the young turkeys, which do not know enough to head against it; and in gales the doors and windows are blown in, and you must hold on to the lighthouse to prevent being blown into the Atlantic. They who merely keep out on the beach in a storm in the winter are sometimes rewarded by the Humane Society. If you would feel the full force of a tempest, take up your residence on the top of Mount Washington, or at the Highland Light, in Truro.

It was said in 1794 that more vessels were cast away

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on the east shore of Truro than anywhere in Barnstable County. Notwithstanding that this lighthouse has since been erected, after almost every storm we read of one or more vessels wrecked here, and sometimes more than a dozen wrecks are visible from this point at one time. The inhabitants hear the crash of vessels going to pieces as they sit round their hearths, and they commonly date from some memorable shipwreck. If the history of this beach could be written from beginning to end, it would be a thrilling page in the history of commerce.

Truro was settled in the year 1700 as *Dangerfield*. This was a very appropriate name, for I afterward read on a monument in the graveyard, near Pamet River, the following inscription: —

Sacred
to the memory of
57 citizens of Truro,
who were lost in seven
vessels, which
foundered at sea in
the memorable gale
of Oct. 3d, 1841.

Their names and ages by families were recorded on different sides of the stone. They are said to have been lost on George's Bank, and I was told that only one vessel drifted ashore on the back side of the Cape, with the boys locked into the cabin and drowned. It is said that the homes of all were "within a circuit of two miles." Twenty-eight inhabitants of Dennis were lost in the same gale; and I read that "in one day, immediately after this storm, nearly or quite one hundred

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bodies were taken up and buried on Cape Cod." The Truro Insurance Company failed for want of skippers to take charge of its vessels. But the surviving inhabitants went a-fishing again the next year as usual. I found that it would not do to speak of shipwrecks there, for almost every family has lost some of its members at sea. "Who lives in that house?" I inquired. "Three widows," was the reply. The stranger and the inhabitant view the shore with very different eyes. The former may have come to see and admire the ocean in a storm; but the latter looks on it as the scene where his nearest relatives were wrecked. When I remarked to an old wrecker partially blind, who was sitting on the edge of the bank smoking a pipe, which he had just lit with a match of dried beach-grass, that I supposed he liked to hear the sound of the surf, he answered, "No, I do not like to hear the sound of the surf." He had lost at least one son in "the memorable gale," and could tell many a tale of the shipwrecks which he had witnessed there.

In the year 1717, a noted pirate named Bellamy was led on to the bar off Wellfleet by the captain of a snow which he had taken, to whom he had offered his vessel again if he would pilot him into Provincetown Harbor. Tradition says that the latter threw over a burning tar barrel in the night, which drifted ashore, and the pirates followed it. A storm coming on, their whole fleet was wrecked, and more than a hundred dead bodies lay along the shore. Six who escaped shipwreck were executed. "At times to this day" (1793), says the historian of Wellfleet, "there are King William and

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Queen Mary's coppers picked up, and pieces of silver called cob-money. The violence of the seas moves the sands on the outer bar, so that at times the iron caboose of the ship [that is, Bellamy's] at low ebbs has been seen." Another tells us that "for many years after this shipwreck, a man of a very singular and frightful aspect used every spring and autumn to be seen traveling on the Cape, who was supposed to have been one of Bellamy's crew. The presumption is that he went to some place where money had been secreted by the pirates, to get such a supply as his exigencies required. When he died, many pieces of gold were found in a girdle which he constantly wore.

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for shells and pebbles, just after that storm which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about one dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate-color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV, and the usual legend on the reverse, *Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum* (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the seashore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by hold-

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ing up round shells (*Scutellæ*) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.

In the Revolution, a British ship of war called the Somerset was wrecked near the Clay Pounds, and all on board, some hundreds in number, were taken prisoners. My informant said that he had never seen any mention of this in the histories, but that at any rate he knew of a silver watch, which one of those prisoners by accident left there, which was still going to tell the story. But this event is noticed by some writers.

The next summer I saw a sloop from Chatham dragging for anchors and chains just off this shore. She had her boats out at the work while she shuffled about on various tacks, and, when anything was found, drew up to hoist it on board. It is a singular employment, at which men are regularly hired and paid for their industry, to hunt to-day in pleasant weather for anchors which have been lost, — the sunken faith and hope of mariners, to which they trusted in vain; now, perchance, it is the rusty one of some old pirate's ship or Norman fisherman, whose cable parted here two hundred years ago, and now the best bower anchor of a Canton or a California ship, which has gone about her business. If the roadsteads of the spiritual ocean could be thus dragged, what rusty flukes of hope deceived and parted chain cables of faith might again be windlassed aboard! enough to sink the finder's craft, or stock new navies to the end of time. The bottom of the sea is strewn with anchors, some deeper and some shallower, and alternately covered and uncovered by the sand, perchance with a small length of iron cable still attached, — to

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which where is the other end? So many unconcluded tales to be continued another time. So, if we had diving-bells adapted to the spiritual deeps, we should see anchors with their cables attached, as thick as eels in vinegar, all wriggling vainly toward their holding-ground. But that is not treasure for us which another man has lost; rather it is for us to seek what no other man has found or can find, — not be Chatham men, dragging for anchors.

The annals of this voracious beach! who could write them, unless it were a shipwrecked sailor? How many who have seen it have seen it only in the midst of danger and distress, the last strip of earth which their mortal eyes beheld. Think of the amount of suffering which a single strand has witnessed! The ancients would have represented it as a sea-monster with open jaws, more terrible than Scylla and Charybdis. An inhabitant of Truro told me that about a fortnight after the St. John was wrecked at Cohasset he found two bodies on the shore at Clay Pounds. They were those of a man and a corpulent woman. The man had thick boots on, though his head was off, but "it was alongside." It took the finder some weeks to get over the sight. Perhaps they were man and wife, and whom God had joined the ocean currents had not put asunder. Yet by what slight accidents at first may they have been associated in their drifting! Some of the bodies of those passengers were picked up far out at sea, boxed up and sunk; some brought ashore and buried. There are more consequences to a shipwreck than the underwriters notice. The Gulf Stream may return some to

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their native shores, or drop them in some out-of-the-way cave of Ocean, where time and the elements will write new riddles with their bones. — But to return to land again.

In this bank, above the clay, I counted in the summer two hundred holes of the bank swallow within a space six rods long, and there were at least one thousand old birds within three times that distance, twittering over the surf. I had never associated them in my thoughts with the beach before. One little boy who had been a-birds'-nesting had got eighty swallows' eggs for his share! Tell it not to the Humane Society! There were many young birds on the clay beneath, which had tumbled out and died. Also there were many crow blackbirds hopping about in the dry fields, and the upland plover were breeding close by the lighthouse. The keeper had once cut off one's wing while mowing, as she sat on her eggs there. This is also a favorite resort for gunners in the fall to shoot the golden plover. As around the shores of a pond are seen devil's-needles, butterflies, etc., so here, to my surprise, I saw at the same season great devil's-needles of a size proportionably larger, or nearly as big as my finger, incessantly coasting up and down the edge of the bank, and butterflies also were hovering over it, and I never saw so many dor-bugs and beetles of various kinds as strewed the beach. They had apparently flown over the bank in the night, and could not get up again, and some had perhaps fallen into the sea and were washed ashore. They may have been in part attracted by the lighthouse lamps.

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The Clay Pounds are a more fertile tract than usual. We saw some fine patches of roots and corn here. As generally on the Cape, the plants had little stalk or leaf, but ran remarkably to seed. The corn was hardly more than half as high as in the interior, yet the ears were large and full, and one farmer told us that he could raise forty bushels on an acre without manure, and sixty with it. The heads of the rye also were remarkably large. The shad-bush (*Amelanchier*), beach plums, and blueberries (*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*), like the apple trees and oaks, were very dwarfish, spreading over the sand, but at the same time very fruitful. The blueberry was but an inch or two high, and its fruit often rested on the ground, so that you did not suspect the presence of the bushes, even on those bare hills, until you were treading on them. I thought that this fertility must be owing mainly to the abundance of moisture in the atmosphere, for I observed that what little grass there was was remarkably laden with dew in the morning, and in summer dense imprisoning fogs frequently last till midday, turning one's beard into a wet napkin about his throat, and the oldest inhabitant may lose his way within a stone's throw of his house or be obliged to follow the beach for a guide. The brick house attached to the lighthouse was exceedingly damp at that season, and writing-paper lost all its stiffness in it. It was impossible to dry your towel after bathing, or to press flowers without their mildewing. The air was so moist that we rarely wished to drink, though we could at all times taste the salt on our lips. Salt was rarely used at table, and our host told us that his cattle in-

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variably refused it when it was offered them, they got so much with their grass and at every breath, but he said that a sick horse or one just from the country would sometimes take a hearty draught of salt water, and seemed to like it and be the better for it.

It was surprising to see how much water was contained in the terminal bud of the seaside goldenrod, standing in the sand early in July, and also how turnips, beets, carrots, etc., flourished even in pure sand. A man traveling by the shore near there not long before us noticed something green growing in the pure sand of the beach, just at high-water mark, and on approaching found it to be a bed of beets flourishing vigorously, probably from seed washed out of the Franklin. Also beets and turnips came up in the seaweed used for manure in many parts of the Cape. This suggests how various plants may have been dispersed over the world to distant islands and continents. Vessels with seeds in their cargoes, destined for particular ports, where perhaps they were not needed, have been cast away on desolate islands, and though their crews perished, some of their seeds have been preserved. Out of many kinds a few would find a soil and climate adapted to them, — become naturalized and perhaps drive out the native plants at last, and so fit the land for the habitation of man. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and for the time lamentable shipwrecks may thus contribute a new vegetable to a continent's stock, and prove on the whole a lasting blessing to its inhabitants. Or winds and currents might effect the same without the intervention of man. What indeed are the various

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succulent plants which grow on the beach but such beds of beets and turnips, sprung originally from seeds which perhaps were cast on the waters for this end, though we do not know the Franklin which they came out of? In ancient times some Mr. Bell (?) was sailing this way in his ark with seeds of rocket, saltwort, sandwort, beach-grass, samphire, bayberry, poverty-grass, etc., all nicely labeled with directions, intending to establish a nursery somewhere; and did not a nursery get established, though he thought that he had failed?

About the lighthouse I observed in the summer the pretty *Polygala polygama*, spreading ray-wise flat on the ground, white pasture thistles (*Cirsium pumilum*), and amid the shrubbery the *Smilax glauca*, which is commonly said not to grow so far north; near the edge of the banks about half a mile southward, the broom crowberry (*Empetrum Conradii*), for which Plymouth is the only locality in Massachusetts usually named, forms pretty green mounds four or five feet in diameter by one foot high, — soft, springy beds for the wayfarer. I saw it afterward in Provincetown, but prettiest of all the scarlet pimpernel, or poor man's weather-glass (*Anagallis arvensis*), greets you in fair weather on almost every square yard of sand. From Yarmouth, I have received the *Chrysopsis falcata* (golden aster), and *Vaccinium stamineum* (deerberry or squaw huckleberry), with fruit not edible, sometimes as large as a cranberry (Sept. 7).

The Highland Lighthouse,[1] where we were staying, is a substantial-looking building of brick, painted white,

[1] The lighthouse has since been rebuilt, and shows a Fresnel light.

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and surmounted by an iron cap. Attached to it is the dwelling of the keeper, one story high, also of brick, and built by government. As we were going to spend the night in a lighthouse, we wished to make the most of so novel an experience, and therefore told our host that we would like to accompany him when he went to light up. At rather early candle-light he lighted a small Japan lamp, allowing it to smoke rather more than we like on ordinary occasions, and told us to follow him. He led the way first through his bedroom, which was placed nearest to the lighthouse, and then through a long, narrow, covered passage-way, between white-washed walls like a prison entry, into the lower part of the lighthouse, where many great butts of oil were arranged around; thence we ascended by a winding and open iron stairway, with a steadily increasing scent of oil and lamp-smoke, to a trap-door in an iron floor, and through this into the lantern. It was a neat building, with everything in apple-pie order, and no danger of anything rusting there for want of oil. The light consisted of fifteen Argand lamps, placed within smooth concave reflectors twenty-one inches in diameter, and arranged in two horizontal circles one above the other, facing every way excepting directly down the Cape. These were surrounded, at a distance of two or three feet, by large plate-glass windows, which defied the storms, with iron sashes, on which rested the iron cap. All the ironwork, except the floor, was painted white. And thus the lighthouse was completed. We walked slowly round in that narrow space as the keeper lighted each lamp in succession, conversing with him at the

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same moment that many a sailor on the deep witnessed the lighting of the Highland Light. His duty was to fill and trim and light his lamps, and keep bright the reflectors. He filled them every morning, and trimmed them commonly once in the course of the night. He complained of the quality of the oil which was furnished. This house consumes about eight hundred gallons in a year, which cost not far from one dollar a gallon; but perhaps a few lives would be saved if better oil were provided. Another lighthouse-keeper said that the same proportion of winter-strained oil was sent to the southernmost lighthouse in the Union as to the most northern. Formerly, when this lighthouse had windows with small and thin panes, a severe storm would sometimes break the glass, and then they were obliged to put up a wooden shutter in haste to save their lights and reflectors, — and sometimes in tempests, when the mariner stood most in need of their guidance, they had thus nearly converted the lighthouse into a dark lantern, which emitted only a few feeble rays, and those commonly on the land or lee side. He spoke of the anxiety and sense of responsibility which he felt in cold and stormy nights in the winter; when he knew that many a poor fellow was depending on him, and his lamps burned dimly, the oil being chilled. Sometimes he was obliged to warm the oil in a kettle in his house at midnight, and fill his lamps over again, — for he could not have a fire in the lighthouse, it produced such a sweat on the windows. His successor told me that he could not keep too hot a fire in such a case. All this because the oil was poor. A government light-

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ing the mariners on its wintry coast with summer-strained oil, to save expense! That were surely a summer-strained mercy.

This keeper's successor, who kindly entertained me the next year, stated that one extremely cold night, when this and all the neighboring lights were burning summer oil, but he had been provident enough to reserve a little winter oil against emergencies, he was waked up with anxiety, and found that his oil was congealed, and his lights almost extinguished; and when, after many hours' exertion, he had succeeded in replenishing his reservoirs with winter oil at the wick end, and with difficulty had made them burn, he looked out and found that the other lights in the neighborhood, which were usually visible to him, had gone out, and he heard afterward that the Pamet River and Billingsgate Lights also had been extinguished.

Our host said that the frost, too, on the windows caused him much trouble, and in sultry summer nights the moths covered them and dimmed his lights; sometimes even small birds flew against the thick plate glass, and were found on the ground beneath in the morning with their necks broken. In the spring of 1855 he found nineteen small yellow birds, perhaps goldfinches or myrtle-birds, thus lying dead around the lighthouse; and sometimes in the fall he had seen where a golden plover had struck the glass in the night, and left the down and the fatty part of its breast on it.

Thus he struggled, by every method, to keep his light shining before men. Surely the lighthouse-keeper has a responsible, if an easy, office. When his lamp

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goes out, *he* goes out; or, at most, only one such accident is pardoned.

I thought it a pity that some poor student did not live there, to profit by all that light, since he would not rob the mariner. "Well," he said, "I do sometimes come up here and read the newspaper when they are noisy down below." Think of fifteen Argand lamps to read the newspaper by! Government oil! — light enough, perchance, to read the Constitution by! I thought that he should read nothing less than his Bible by that light. I had a classmate who fitted for college by the lamps of a lighthouse, which was more light, we think, than the University afforded.

When we had come down and walked a dozen rods from the lighthouse, we found that we could not get the full strength of its light on the narrow strip of land between it and the shore, being too low for the focus, and we saw only so many feeble and rayless stars; but at forty rods inland we could see to read, though we were still indebted to only one lamp. Each reflector sent forth a separate "fan" of light; one shone on the windmill, and one in the hollow, while the intervening spaces were in shadow. This light is said to be visible twenty nautical miles and more, from an observer fifteen feet above the level of the sea. We could see the revolving light at Race Point, the end of the Cape, about nine miles distant, and also the light on Long Point, at the entrance of Provincetown Harbor, and one of the distant Plymouth Harbor lights, across the Bay, nearly in a range with the last, like a star in the horizon. The keeper thought that the other

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Plymouth light was concealed by being exactly in a range with the Long Point Light. He told us that the mariner was sometimes led astray by a mackerel-fisher's lantern, who was afraid of being run down in the night, or even by a cottager's light, mistaking them for some well-known light on the coast, and, when he discovered his mistake, was wont to curse the prudent fisher or the wakeful cottager without reason.

Though it was once declared that Providence placed this mass of clay here on purpose to erect a lighthouse on, the keeper said that the lighthouse should have been erected half a mile farther south, where the coast begins to bend, and where the light could be seen at the same time with the Nauset Lights, and distinguished from them. They now talk of building one there. It happens that the present one is the more useless now, so near the extremity of the Cape, because other lighthouses have since been erected there.

Among the many regulations of the Lighthouse Board, hanging against the wall here, many of them excellent, perhaps, if there were a regiment stationed here to attend to them, there is one requiring the keeper to keep an account of the number of vessels which pass his light during the day. But there are a hundred vessels in sight at once, steering in all directions, many on the very verge of the horizon, and he must have more eyes than Argus, and be a good deal farther sighted, to tell which are passing his light. It is an employment in some respects best suited to the habits of the gulls which coast up and down here, and circle over the sea.

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I was told by the next keeper, that on the 8th of June following, a particularly clear and beautiful morning, he rose about half an hour before sunrise, and having a little time to spare, for his custom was to extinguish his lights at sunrise, walked down toward the shore to see what he might find. When he got to the edge of the bank he looked up, and, to his astonishment, saw the sun rising, and already part way above the horizon. Thinking that his clock was wrong, he made haste back, and though it was still too early by the clock, extinguished his lamps, and when he had got through and come down, he looked out the window, and, to his still greater astonishment, saw the sun just where it was before, two thirds above the horizon. He showed me where its rays fell on the wall across the room. He proceeded to make a fire, and when he had done, there was the sun still at the same height. Whereupon, not trusting to his own eyes any longer, he called up his wife to look at it, and she saw it also. There were vessels in sight on the ocean, and their crews, too, he said, must have seen it, for its rays fell on them. It remained at that height for about fifteen minutes by the clock, and then rose as usual, and nothing else extraordinary happened during that day. Though accustomed to the coast, he had never witnessed nor heard of such a phenomenon before. I suggested that there might have been a cloud in the horizon invisible to him, which rose with the sun, and his clock was only as accurate as the average; or perhaps, as he denied the possibility of this, it was such a looming of the sun as is said to occur at Lake Superior and elsewhere. Sir John Frank-

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lin, for instance, says in his Narrative, that when he was on the shore of the Polar Sea, the horizontal refraction varied so much one morning that "the upper limb of the sun twice appeared at the horizon before it finally rose."

He certainly must be a son of Aurora to whom the sun looms, when there are so many millions to whom it *glooms* rather, or who never see it till an hour *after* it has risen. But it behooves us old stagers to keep our lamps trimmed and burning to the last, and not trust to the sun's looming.

This keeper remarked that the centre of the flame should be exactly opposite the centre of the reflectors, and that accordingly, if he was not careful to turn down his wicks in the morning, the sun falling on the reflectors on the south side of the building would set fire to them, like a burning-glass, in the coldest day, and he would look up at noon and see them all lighted! When your lamp is ready to give light, it is readiest to receive it, and the sun will light it. His successor said that he had never known them to blaze in such a case, but merely to smoke.

I saw that this was a place of wonders. In a sea-turn or shallow fog while I was there the next summer, it being clear overhead, the edge of the bank twenty rods distant appeared like a mountain pasture in the horizon. I was completely deceived by it, and I could then understand why mariners sometimes ran ashore in such cases, especially in the night, supposing it to be far away, though they could see the land. Once since this, being in a large oyster-boat two or three

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hundred miles from here, in a dark night, when there was a thin veil of mist on land and water, we came so near to running on to the land before our skipper was aware of it, that the first warning was my hearing the sound of the surf under my elbow. I could almost have jumped ashore, and we were obliged to go about very suddenly to prevent striking. The distant light for which we were steering, supposing it a lighthouse, five or six miles off, came through the cracks of a fisherman's bunk not more than six rods distant.

The keeper entertained us handsomely in his solitary little ocean house. He was a man of singular patience and intelligence, who, when our queries struck him, rang as clear as a bell in response. The lighthouse lamp a few feet distant shone full into my chamber, and made it as bright as day, so I knew exactly how the Highland Light bore all that night, and I was in no danger of being wrecked. Unlike the last, this was as still as a summer night. I thought as I lay there, half awake and half asleep, looking upward through the window at the lights above my head, how many sleepless eyes from far out on the ocean stream — mariners of all nations spinning their yarns through the various watches of the night — were directed toward my couch.

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IX

THE SEA AND THE DESERT

THE lighthouse lamps were still burning, though now with a silvery lustre, when I rose to see the sun come out of the ocean; for he still rose eastward of us; but I was convinced that he must have come out of a dry bed beyond that stream, though he seemed to come out of the water.

> "The sun once more touched the fields,
> Mounting to heaven from the fair flowing
> Deep-running Ocean."

Now we saw countless sails of mackerel-fishers abroad on the deep, one fleet in the north just pouring round the Cape, another standing down toward Chatham, and our host's son went off to join some lagging member of the first which had not yet left the Bay.

Before we left the lighthouse we were obliged to anoint our shoes faithfully with tallow, for walking on the beach, in the salt water and the sand, had turned them red and crisp. To counterbalance this, I have remarked that the seashore, even where muddy, as it is not here, is singularly clean; for, notwithstanding the spattering of the water and mud and squirting of the clams, while walking to and from the boat, your best black pants retain no stain nor dirt, such as they would acquire from walking in the country.

We have heard that a few days after this, when the

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Provincetown Bank was robbed, speedy emissaries from Provincetown made particular inquiries concerning us at this lighthouse. Indeed, they traced us all the way down the Cape, and concluded that we came by this unusual route down the back side and on foot in order that we might discover a way to get off with our booty when we had committed the robbery. The Cape is so long and narrow, and so bare withal, that it is well-nigh impossible for a stranger to visit it without the knowledge of its inhabitants generally, unless he is wrecked on to it in the night. So, when this robbery occurred, all their suspicions seem to have at once centred on us two travelers who had just passed down it. If we had not chanced to leave the Cape so soon, we should probably have been arrested. The real robbers were two young men from Worcester County who traveled with a centre-bit, and are said to have done their work very neatly. But the only bank that we pried into was the great Cape Cod sand-bank, and we robbed it only of an old French crown piece, some shells and pebbles, and the materials of this story.

Again we took to the beach for another day (October 13), walking along the shore of the resounding sea, determined to get it into us. We wished to associate with the ocean until it lost the pond-like look which it wears to a countryman. We still thought that we could see the other side. Its surface was still more sparkling than the day before, and we beheld "the countless smilings of the ocean waves;" though some of them were pretty broad grins, for still the wind blew and the billows broke in foam along the beach. The nearest

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beach to us on the other side, whither we looked, due east, was on the coast of Galicia, in Spain, whose capital is Santiago, though by old poets' reckoning it should have been Atlantis or the Hesperides; but heaven is found to be farther west now. At first we were abreast of that part of Portugal *entre Douro e Miño*, and then Galicia and the port of Pontevedra opened to us as we walked along; but we did not enter, the breakers ran so high. The bold headland of Cape Finisterre, a little north of east, jutted toward us next, with its vain brag, for we flung back, — "Here is Cape Cod, — Cape Land's-Beginning." A little indentation toward the north — for the land loomed to our imaginations by a common mirage — we knew was the Bay of Biscay, and we sang: —

"There we lay, till next day,
In the Bay of Biscay O!"

A little south of east was Palos, where Columbus weighed anchor, and farther yet the pillars which Hercules set up; concerning which when we inquired at the top of our voices what was written on them, — for we had the morning sun in our faces, and could not see distinctly, — the inhabitants shouted *Ne plus ultra* (no more beyond), but the wind bore to us the truth only, *plus ultra* (more beyond), and over the Bay westward was echoed *ultra* (beyond). We spoke to them through the surf about the Far West, the true Hesperia, ἔω πέρας or end of the day, the This Side Sundown, where the sun was extinguished in the *Pacific*, and we advised them to pull up stakes and plant those pillars of theirs on the shore of California, whither all our folks were

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gone, — the only *ne* plus ultra now. Whereat they looked crestfallen on their cliffs, for we had taken the wind out of all their sails.

We could not perceive that any of their leavings washed up here, though we picked up a child's toy, a small dismantled boat, which may have been lost at Pontevedra.

The Cape became narrower and narrower as we approached its wrist between Truro and Provincetown, and the shore inclined more decidedly to the west. At the head of East Harbor Creek, the Atlantic is separated but by half a dozen rods of sand from the tide-waters of the Bay. From the Clay Pounds the bank flatted off for the last ten miles to the extremity at Race Point, though the highest parts, which are called "islands" from their appearance at a distance on the sea, were still seventy or eighty feet above the Atlantic, and afforded a good view of the latter, as well as a constant view of the Bay, there being no trees nor a hill sufficient to interrupt it. Also the sands began to invade the land more and more, until finally they had entire possession from sea to sea, at the narrowest part. For three or four miles between Truro and Provincetown there were no inhabitants from shore to shore, and there were but three or four houses for twice that distance.

As we plodded along, either by the edge of the ocean, where the sand was rapidly drinking up the last wave that wet it, or over the sand-hills of the bank, the mackerel fleet continued to pour round the Cape north of us, ten or fifteen miles distant, in countless numbers,

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schooner after schooner, till they made a city on the water. They were so thick that many appeared to be afoul of one another; now all standing on this tack, now on that. We saw how well the New-Englanders had followed up Captain John Smith's suggestions with regard to the fisheries, made in 1616, — to what a pitch they had carried "this contemptible trade of fish," as he significantly styles it, and were now equal to the Hollanders whose example he holds up for the English to emulate; notwithstanding that "in this faculty," as he says, "the former are so naturalized, and of their vents so certainly acquainted, as there is no likelihood they will ever be paralleled, having two or three thousand busses, flat-bottoms, sword-pinks, todes, and such like, that breeds them sailors, mariners, soldiers, and merchants, never to be wrought out of that trade and fit for any other." We thought that it would take all these names and more to describe the numerous craft which we saw. Even then, some years before our "renowned sires" with their "peerless dames" stepped on Plymouth Rock, he wrote, "Newfoundland doth yearly fraught near eight hundred sail of ships with a silly, lean, skinny poor-john, and cor-fish," though all their supplies must be annually transported from Europe. Why not plant a colony here then, and raise those supplies on the spot? "Of all the four parts of the world," says he, "that I have yet seen, not inhabited, could I have but means to transport a colony, I would rather live here than anywhere. And if it did not maintain itself, were we but once indifferently well fitted, let us starve." Then "fishing before your doors," you "may every night

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sleep quietly ashore, with good cheer and what fires you will, or, when you please, with your wives and family." Already he anticipates "the new towns in New England in memory of their old," — and who knows what may be discovered in the "heart and entrails" of the land, "seeing even the very edges," etc., etc.

All this has been accomplished, and more, and where is Holland now? Verily the Dutch have taken it. There was no long interval between the suggestion of Smith and the eulogy of Burke.

Still one after another the mackerel schooners hove in sight round the head of the Cape, "whitening all the sea road," and we watched each one for a moment with an undivided interest. It seemed a pretty sport. Here in the country it is only a few idle boys or loafers that go a-fishing on a rainy day; but there it appeared as if every able-bodied man and helpful boy in the Bay had gone out on a pleasure excursion in their yachts, and all would at last land and have a chowder on the Cape. The gazetteer tells you gravely how many of the men and boys of these towns are engaged in the whale, cod, and mackerel fishery, how many go to the banks of Newfoundland, or the coast of Labrador, the Straits of Belle Isle or the Bay of Chaleurs (Shalore, the sailors call it); as if I were to reckon up the number of boys in Concord who are engaged during the summer in the perch, pickerel, bream, horn-pout, and shiner fishery, of which no one keeps the statistics, — though I think that it is pursued with as much profit to the moral and intellectual man (or boy), and certainly with less danger to the physical one.

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One of my playmates, who was apprenticed to a printer, and was somewhat of a wag, asked his master one afternoon if he might go a-fishing, and his master consented. He was gone three months. When he came back, he said that he had been to the Grand Banks, and went to setting type again as if only an afternoon had intervened.

I confess I was surprised to find that so many men spent their whole day, ay, their whole lives almost, a-fishing. It is remarkable what a serious business men make of getting their dinners, and how universally shiftlessness and a groveling taste take refuge in a merely ant-like industry. Better go without your dinner, I thought, than be thus everlastingly fishing for it like a cormorant. Of course, *viewed from the shore*, our pursuits in the country appear not a whit less frivolous.

I once sailed three miles on a mackerel cruise myself. It was a Sunday evening after a very warm day in which there had been frequent thunder-showers, and I had walked along the shore from Cohasset to Duxbury. I wished to get over from the last place to Clark's Island, but no boat could stir, they said, at that stage of the tide, they being left high on the mud. At length I learned that the tavern-keeper, Winsor, was going out mackereling with seven men that evening, and would take me. When there had been due delay, we one after another straggled down to the shore in a leisurely manner, as if waiting for the tide still, and in india-rubber boots, or carrying our shoes in our hands, waded to the boats, each of the crew bearing an armful of wood, and

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one a bucket of new potatoes besides. Then they resolved that each should bring one more armful of wood, and that would be enough. They had already got a barrel of water, and had some more in the schooner. We shoved the boats a dozen rods over the mud and water till they floated, then, rowing half a mile to the vessel, climbed aboard, and there we were in a mackerel schooner, a fine stout vessel of forty-three tons, whose name I forget. The baits were not dry on the hooks. There was the mill in which they ground the mackerel, and the trough to hold it, and the long-handled dipper to cast it overboard with; and already in the harbor we saw the surface rippled with schools of small mackerel, the real *Scomber vernalis*. The crew proceeded leisurely to weigh anchor and raise their two sails, there being a fair but very slight wind; — and the sun now setting clear and shining on the vessel after the thundershowers, I thought that I could not have commenced the voyage under more favorable auspices. They had four dories and commonly fished in them, else they fished on the starboard side aft where their lines hung ready, two to a man. The boom swung round once or twice, and Winsor cast overboard the foul juice of mackerel mixed with rain-water which remained in his trough, and then we gathered about the helmsman and told stories. I remember that the compass was affected by iron in its neighborhood and varied a few degrees. There was one among us just returned from California, who was now going as passenger for his health and amusement. They expected to be gone about a week, to begin fishing the next morning, and to carry their

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fish fresh to Boston. They landed me at Clark's Island, where the Pilgrims landed, for my companions wished to get some milk for the voyage. But I had seen the whole of it. The rest was only going to sea and catching the mackerel. Moreover, it was as well that I did not remain with them, considering the small quantity of supplies they had taken.

Now I saw the mackerel fleet *on its fishing-ground*, though I was not at first aware of it. So my experience was complete.

It was even more cold and windy to-day than before, and we were frequently glad to take shelter behind a sand-hill. None of the elements were resting. On the beach there is a ceaseless activity, always something going on, in storm and in calm, winter and summer, night and day. Even the sedentary man here enjoys a breadth of view which is almost equivalent to motion. In clear weather the laziest may look across the Bay as far as Plymouth at a glance, or over the Atlantic as far as human vision reaches, merely raising his eyelids; or if he is too lazy to look after all, he can hardly help *hearing* the ceaseless dash and roar of the breakers. The restless ocean may at any moment cast up a whale or a wrecked vessel at your feet. All the reporters in the world, the most rapid stenographers, could not report the news it brings. No creature could move slowly where there was so much life around. The few wreckers were either going or coming, and the ships and the sandpipers, and the screaming gulls overhead; nothing stood still but the shore. The little beach-birds trotted past close to the water's edge, or

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paused but an instant to swallow their food, keeping time with the elements. I wondered how they ever got used to the sea, that they ventured so near the waves. Such tiny inhabitants the land brought forth! except one fox. And what could a fox do, looking on the Atlantic from that high bank? What is the sea to a fox? Sometimes we met a wrecker with his cart and dog, — and his dog's faint bark at us wayfarers, heard through the roaring of the surf, sounded ridiculously faint. To see a little trembling dainty-footed cur stand on the margin of the ocean, and ineffectually bark at a beach-bird, amid the roar of the Atlantic! Come with design to bark at a whale, perchance! That sound will do for farmyards. All the dogs looked out of place there, naked and as if shuddering at the vastness; and I thought that they would not have been there had it not been for the countenance of their masters. Still less could you think of a cat bending her steps that way, and shaking her wet foot over the Atlantic; yet even this happens sometimes, they tell me. In summer I saw the tender young of the piping plover, like chickens just hatched, mere pinches of down on two legs, running in troops, with a faint peep, along the edge of the waves. I used to see packs of half-wild dogs haunting the lonely beach on the south shore of Staten Island, in New York Bay, for the sake of the carrion there cast up; and I remember that once, when for a long time I had heard a furious barking in the tall grass of the marsh, a pack of half a dozen large dogs burst forth on to the beach, pursuing a little one which ran straight to me for protection, and I afforded it with

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some stones, though at some risk to myself; but the next day the little one was the first to bark at me. Under these circumstances I could not but remember the words of the poet: —

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As *his* ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

"Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not."

Sometimes, when I was approaching the carcass of a horse or ox which lay on the beach there, where there was no living creature in sight, a dog would unexpectedly emerge from it and slink away with a mouthful of offal.

The seashore is a sort of neutral ground, a most advantageous point from which to contemplate this world. It is even a trivial place. The waves forever rolling to the land are too far-traveled and untamable to be familiar. Creeping along the endless beach amid the sun-squall and the foam, it occurs to us that we, too, are the product of sea-slime.

It is a wild, rank place, and there is no flattery in it. Strewn with crabs, horseshoes, and razor clams, and whatever the sea casts up, — a vast *morgue*, where famished dogs may range in packs, and crows come daily

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to glean the pittance which the tide leaves them. The carcasses of men and beasts together lie stately up upon its shelf, rotting and bleaching in the sun and waves, and each tide turns them in their beds, and tucks fresh sand under them. There is naked Nature, — inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man, nibbling at the cliffy shore where gulls wheel amid the spray.

We saw this forenoon what, at a distance, looked like a bleached log with a branch still left on it. It proved to be one of the principal bones of a whale, whose carcass, having been stripped of blubber at sea and cut adrift, had been washed up some months before. It chanced that this was the most conclusive evidence which we met with to prove, what the Copenhagen antiquaries assert, that these shores were the *Furdustrandas*, which Thorhall, the companion of Thorfinn during his expedition to Vinland in 1007, sailed past in disgust. It appears that after they had left the Cape and explored the country about Straum-Fiordr (Buzzard's Bay!), Thorhall, who was disappointed at not getting any wine to drink there, determined to sail north again in search of Vinland. Though the antiquaries have given us the original Icelandic, I prefer to quote their translation, since theirs is the only Latin which I know to have been aimed at Cape Cod.

"Cum parati erant, sublato
velo, cecinit Thorhallus:
Eo redeamus, ubi conterranei
sunt nostri! faciamus alitem,
expansi arenosi peritum,
lata navis explorare curricula:

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dum procellam incitantes gladii
morae impatientes, qui terram
collaudant, Furdustrandas
inhabitant et coquunt balaenas."

In other words, "When they were ready and their sail hoisted, Thorhall sang: Let us return thither where our fellow-countrymen are. Let us make a bird [1] skillful to fly through the heaven of sand,[2] to explore the broad track of ships; while warriors who impel to the tempest of swords,[3] who praise the land, inhabit Wonder Strands, *and cook whales.*" And so he sailed north past Cape Cod, as the antiquaries say, "and was shipwrecked on to Ireland."

Though once there were more whales cast up here, I think that it was never more wild than now. We do not associate the idea of antiquity with the ocean, nor wonder how it looked a thousand years ago, as we do of the land, for it was equally wild and unfathomable always. The Indians have left no traces on its surface, but it is the same to the civilized man and the savage. The aspect of the shore only has changed. The ocean is a wilderness reaching round the globe, wilder than a Bengal jungle, and fuller of monsters, washing the very wharves of our cities and the gardens of our seaside residences. Serpents, bears, hyenas, tigers rapidly vanish as civilization advances, but the most populous and civilized city cannot scare a shark far from its wharves. It is no further advanced than Singapore, with its tigers, in this respect. The Boston papers had

[1] *I. e.*, a vessel.

[2] The sea, which is arched over its sandy bottom like a heaven.

[3] Battle.

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never told me that there were seals in the harbor. I had always associated these with the Esquimaux and other outlandish people. Yet from the parlor windows all along the coast you may see families of them sporting on the flats. They were as strange to me as the merman would be. Ladies who never walk in the woods, sail over the sea. To go to sea! Why, it is to have the experience of Noah, — to realize the deluge. Every vessel is an ark.

We saw no fences as we walked the beach, no birchen riders, highest of rails, projecting into the sea to keep the cows from wading round, nothing to remind us that man was proprietor of the shore. Yet a Truro man did tell us that owners of land on the east side of that town were regarded as owning the beach, in order that they might have the control of it so far as to defend themselves against the encroachments of the sand and the beach-grass, — for even this friend is sometimes regarded as a foe; but he said that this was not the case on the Bay side. Also I have seen, in sheltered parts of the Bay, temporary fences running to low-water mark, the posts being set in sills or sleepers placed transversely.

After we had been walking many hours, the mackerel fleet still hovered in the northern horizon nearly in the same direction, but farther off, hull down. Though their sails were set they never sailed away, nor yet came to anchor, but stood on various tacks as close together as vessels in a haven, and we, in our ignorance, thought that they were contending patiently with adverse winds, beating eastward; but we learned afterward that they

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were even then on their fishing-ground, and that they caught mackerel without taking in their mainsails or coming to anchor, "a smart breeze" (thence called a mackerel breeze) "being," as one says, "considered most favorable" for this purpose. We counted about two hundred sail of mackerel-fishers within one small arc of the horizon, and a nearly equal number had disappeared southward. Thus they hovered about the extremity of the Cape, like moths round a candle, the lights at Race Point and Long Point being bright candles for them at night, and at this distance they looked fair and white, as if they had not yet flown into the light, but nearer at hand afterward, we saw how some had formerly singed their wings and bodies.

A village seems thus, where its able-bodied men are all plowing the ocean together, as a common field. In North Truro the women and girls may sit at their doors, and see where their husbands and brothers are harvesting their mackerel fifteen or twenty miles off, on the sea, with hundreds of white harvest wagons, just as in the country the farmers' wives sometimes see their husbands working in a distant hillside field. But the sound of no dinner-horn can reach the fisher's ear.

Having passed the narrowest part of the waist of the Cape, though still in Truro, for this township is about twelve miles long on the shore, we crossed over to the Bay side, not half a mile distant, in order to spend the noon on the nearest shrubby sand-hill in Provincetown, called Mount Ararat, which rises one hundred feet above the ocean. On our way thither we had occasion to admire the various beautiful forms and colors of the

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sand, and we noticed an interesting mirage, which I have since found that Hitchcock also observed on the sands of the Cape. We were crossing a shallow valley in the desert, where the smooth and spotless sand sloped upward by a small angle to the horizon on every side, and at the lowest part was a long chain of clear but shallow pools. As we were approaching these for a drink, in a diagonal direction across the valley, they appeared inclined at a slight but decided angle to the horizon, though they were plainly and broadly connected with one another, and there was not the least ripple to suggest a current; so that by the time we had reached a convenient part of one we seemed to have ascended several feet. They appeared to lie by magic on the side of the vale, like a mirror left in a slanting position. It was a very pretty mirage for a Provincetown desert, but not amounting to what, in Sanscrit, is called "the thirst of the gazelle," as there was real water here for a base, and we were able to quench our thirst after all.

Professor Rafn, of Copenhagen, thinks that the mirage which I noticed, but which an old inhabitant of Provincetown, to whom I mentioned it, had never seen nor heard of, had something to do with the name "Furdustrandas," *i. e.*, Wonder Strands, given, as I have said, in the old Icelandic account of Thorfinn's expedition to Vinland in the year 1007, to a part of the coast on which he landed. But these sands are more remarkable for their length than for their mirage, which is common to all deserts, and the reason for the name which the Northmen themselves give — "because

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it took a long time to sail by them" — is sufficient and more applicable to these shores. However, if you should sail all the way from Greenland to Buzzard's Bay along the coast, you would get sight of a good many sandy beaches. But whether Thor-finn saw the mirage here or not, Thor-eau, one of the same family, did; and perchance it was because Leif the Lucky had, in a previous voyage, taken Thor-er and his people off the rock in the middle of the sea, that Thor-eau was born to see it.

This was not the only mirage which I saw on the Cape. That half of the beach next the bank is commonly level, or nearly so, while the other slopes downward to the water. As I was walking upon the edge of the bank in Wellfleet at sundown, it seemed to me that the inside half of the beach sloped upward toward the water to meet the other, forming a ridge ten or twelve feet high the whole length of the shore, but higher always opposite to where I stood; and I was not convinced of the contrary till I descended the bank, though the shaded outlines left by the waves of a previous tide but halfway *down* the apparent declivity might have taught me better. A stranger may easily detect what is strange to the oldest inhabitant, for the strange is his province. The old oysterman, speaking of gull-shooting, had said that you must aim under, when firing down the bank.

A neighbor tells me that one August, looking through a glass from Naushon to some vessels which were sailing along near Martha's Vineyard, the water about them appeared perfectly smooth, so that they were

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reflected in it, and yet their full sails proved that it must be rippled, and they who were with him thought that it was a mirage, *i. e.*, a reflection from a haze.

From the above-mentioned sand-hill we overlooked Provincetown and its harbor, now emptied of vessels, and also a wide expanse of ocean. As we did not wish to enter Provincetown before night, though it was cold and windy, we returned across the deserts to the Atlantic side, and walked along the beach again nearly to Race Point, being still greedy of the sea influence. All the while it was not so calm as the reader may suppose, but it was blow, blow, blow, — roar, roar, roar, — tramp, tramp, tramp, — without interruption. The shore now trended nearly east and west.

Before sunset, having already seen the mackerel fleet returning into the Bay, we left the seashore on the north of Provincetown, and made our way across the desert to the eastern extremity of the town. From the first high sand-hill, covered with beach-grass and bushes to its top, on the edge of the desert, we overlooked the shrubby hill and swamp country which surrounds Provincetown on the north, and protects it, in some measure, from the invading sand. Notwithstanding the universal barrenness, and the contiguity of the desert, I never saw an autumnal landscape so beautifully painted as this was. It was like the richest rug imaginable spread over an uneven surface; no damask nor velvet, nor Tyrian dye or stuffs, nor the work of any loom, could ever match it. There was the incredibly bright red of the huckleberry, and the reddish brown of the bayberry, mingled with the bright

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and living green of small pitch pines, and also the duller green of the bayberry, boxberry, and plum, the yellowish green of the shrub oaks, and the various golden and yellow and fawn-colored tints of the birch and maple and aspen, each making its own figure, and, in the midst, the few yellow sand-slides on the sides of the hills looked like the white floor seen through rents in the rug. Coming from the country as I did, and many autumnal woods as I had seen, this was perhaps the most novel and remarkable sight that I saw on the Cape. Probably the brightness of the tints was enhanced by contrast with the sand which surrounded this tract. This was a part of the furniture of Cape Cod. We had for days walked up the long and bleak piazza which runs along her Atlantic side, then over the sanded floor of her halls, and now we were being introduced into her boudoir. The hundred white sails crowding round Long Point into Provincetown Harbor, seen over the painted hills in front, looked like toy ships upon a mantelpiece.

The peculiarity of this autumnal landscape consisted in the lowness and thickness of the shrubbery, no less than in the brightness of the tints. It was like a thick stuff of worsted or a fleece, and looked as if a giant could take it up by the hem, or rather the tasseled fringe which trailed out on the sand, and shake it, though it needed not to be shaken. But no doubt the dust would fly in that case, for not a little has accumulated underneath it. Was it not such an autumnal landscape as this which suggested our high-colored rugs and carpets? Hereafter when I look on a richer rug than

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usual, and study its figures, I shall think, there are the huckleberry hills, and there the denser swamps of boxberry and blueberry; there the shrub oak patches and the bayberries, there the maples and the birches and the pines. What other dyes are to be compared to these? They were warmer colors than I had associated with the New England coast.

After threading a swamp full of boxberry, and climbing several hills covered with shrub oaks, without a path, where shipwrecked men would be in danger of perishing in the night, we came down upon the eastern extremity of the four planks which run the whole length of Provincetown street. This, which is the last town on the Cape, lies mainly in one street along the curving beach fronting the southeast. The sand-hills, covered with shrubbery and interposed with swamps and ponds, rise immediately behind it in the form of a crescent, which is from half a mile to a mile or more wide in the middle, and beyond these is the desert, which is the greater part of its territory, stretching to the sea on the east and west and north. The town is compactly built in the narrow space, from ten to fifty rods deep, between the harbor and the sand-hills, and contained at that time about twenty-six hundred inhabitants. The houses, in which a more modern and pretending style has at length prevailed over the fisherman's hut, stand on the inner or plank side of the street, and the fish and store houses, with the picturesque-looking windmills of the salt-works, on the water side. The narrow portion of the beach between, forming the street, about eighteen feet wide, the only one

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where one carriage could pass another, — if there was more than one carriage in the town, — looked much "heavier" than any portion of the beach or the desert which we had walked on, it being above the reach of the highest tide, and the sand being kept loose by the occasional passage of a traveler. We learned that the four planks on which we were walking had been bought by the town's share of the Surplus Revenue, the disposition of which was a bone of contention between the inhabitants, till they wisely resolved thus to put it under foot. Yet some, it was said, were so provoked because they did not receive their particular share in money, that they persisted in walking in the sand a long time after the sidewalk was built. This is the only instance which I happen to know in which the surplus revenue proved a blessing to any town. A surplus revenue of dollars from the treasury to stem the greater evil of a surplus revenue of sand from the ocean. They expected to make a hard road by the time these planks were worn out. Indeed, they have already done so since we were there, and have almost forgotten their sandy baptism.

As we passed along we observed the inhabitants engaged in curing either fish or the coarse salt hay which they had brought home and spread on the beach before their doors, looking as yellow as if they had raked it out of the sea. The front-yard plots appeared like what indeed they were, portions of the beach fenced in, with beach-grass growing in them, as if they were sometimes covered by the tide. You might still pick up shells and pebbles there. There were a few trees among

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the houses, especially silver abeles, willows, and balm-of-Gileads; and one man showed me a young oak which he had transplanted from behind the town, thinking it an apple tree. But every man to his trade. Though he had little woodcraft, he was not the less weather-wise, and gave us one piece of information, viz., he had observed that when a thunder-cloud came up with a flood-tide it did not rain. This was the most completely maritime town that we were ever in. It was merely a good harbor, surrounded by land, dry if not firm, — an inhabited beach, whereon fishermen cured and stored their fish, without any back country. When ashore the inhabitants still walk on planks. A few small patches have been reclaimed from the swamps, containing commonly half a dozen square rods only each. We saw one which was fenced with four lengths of rail; also a fence made wholly of hogshead staves stuck in the ground. These, and such as these, were all the cultivated and cultivable land in Provincetown. We were told that there were thirty or forty acres in all, but we did not discover a quarter part so much, and that was well dusted with sand, and looked as if the desert was claiming it. They are now turning some of their swamps into Cranberry Meadows on quite an extensive scale.

Yet far from being out of the way, Provincetown is directly in the way of the navigator, and he is lucky who does not run afoul of it in the dark. It is situated on one of the highways of commerce, and men from all parts of the globe touch there in the course of a year.

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The mackerel fleet had nearly all got in before us, it being Saturday night, excepting that division which had stood down towards Chatham in the morning; and from a hill where we went to see the sun set in the Bay, we counted two hundred goodly-looking schooners at anchor in the harbor at various distances from the shore, and more were yet coming round the Cape. As each came to anchor, it took in sail and swung round in the wind, and lowered its boat. They belonged chiefly to Wellfleet, Truro, and Cape Ann. This was that city of canvas which we had seen hull down in the horizon. Near at hand, and under bare poles, there were unexpectedly black-looking vessels, μέλαιναι νῆες. A fisherman told us that there were fifteen hundred vessels in the mackerel fleet, and that he had counted three hundred and fifty in Provincetown Harbor at one time. Being obliged to anchor at a considerable distance from the shore on account of the shallowness of the water, they made the impression of a larger fleet than the vessels at the wharves of a large city. As they had been manœuvring out there all day seemingly for our entertainment, while we were walking northwestward along the Atlantic, so now we found them flocking into Provincetown Harbor at night, just as we arrived, as if to meet us, and exhibit themselves close at hand. Standing by Race Point and Long Point with various speed, they reminded me of fowls coming home to roost.

These were genuine New England vessels. It is stated in the Journal of Moses Prince, a brother of the annalist, under date of 1721, at which time he visited Gloucester, that the first vessel of the class called

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schooner was built at Gloucester about eight years before, by Andrew Robinson; and late in the same century one Cotton Tufts gives us the tradition with some particulars, which he learned on a visit to the same place. According to the latter, Robinson having constructed a vessel which he masted and rigged in a peculiar manner, on her going off the stocks a by-stander cried out, "*Oh, how she scoons!*" whereat Robinson replied, "*A schooner let her be!*" "From which time," says Tufts, "vessels thus masted and rigged have gone by the name of schooners; before which, vessels of this description were not known in Europe."[1] Yet I can hardly believe this, for a schooner has always seemed to me the typical vessel.

According to C. E. Potter of Manchester, New Hampshire, the very word schooner is of New England origin, being from the Indian *schoon* or *scoot*, meaning to rush, as Schoodic, from *scoot* and *anke*, a place where water rushes. N. B. Somebody of Gloucester was to read a paper on this matter before a genealogical society in Boston, March 3, 1859, according to the *Boston Journal*, q. v.

Nearly all who come out must walk on the four planks which I have mentioned, so that you are pretty sure to meet all the inhabitants of Provincetown who come out in the course of a day, provided you keep out yourself. This evening the planks were crowded with mackerel-fishers, to whom we gave and from whom we took the wall, as we returned to our hotel. This hotel was kept by a tailor, his shop on the one side of the

[1] See *Mass. Hist. Coll.*, vol. ix, 1st series, and vol. i, 4th series.

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door, his hotel on the other, and his day seemed to be divided between carving meat and carving broadcloth.

The next morning, though it was still more cold and blustering than the day before, we took to the deserts again, for we spent our days wholly out of doors, in the sun when there was any, and in the wind which never failed. After threading the shrubby hill-country at the southwest end of the town, west of the Shank-Painter Swamp, whose expressive name — for we understood it at first as a landsman naturally would — gave it importance in our eyes, we crossed the sands to the shore south of Race Point and three miles distant, and thence roamed round eastward through the desert to where we had left the sea the evening before. We traveled five or six miles after we got out there, on a curving line, and might have gone nine or ten, over vast platters of pure sand, from the midst of which we could not see a particle of vegetation, excepting the distant thin fields of beach-grass, which crowned and made the ridges toward which the sand sloped upward on each side; — all the while in the face of a cutting wind as cold as January; indeed, we experienced no weather so cold as this for nearly two months afterward. This desert extends from the extremity of the Cape through Provincetown into Truro, and many a time as we were traversing it we were reminded of "Riley's Narrative" of his captivity in the sands of Arabia, notwithstanding the cold. Our eyes magnified the patches of beach-grass into corn-fields, in the horizon, and we probably exaggerated the height of the ridges on account of the

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mirage. I was pleased to learn afterward, from Kalm's Travels in North America, that the inhabitants of the Lower St. Lawrence call this grass (*Calamagrostis arenaria*), and also sea lyme grass (*Elymus arenarius*), *seigle de mer;* and he adds, "I have been assured that these plants grow in great plenty in Newfoundland, and on other North American shores; the places covered with them looking, at a distance, like cornfields; which might explain the passage in our northern accounts [he wrote in 1749] of the excellent wine land [*Vinland det goda*, Translator], which mentions that they had found whole fields of wheat growing wild."

The beach-grass is "two to four feet high, of a sea-green color," and it is said to be widely diffused over the world. In the Hebrides it is used for mats, pack-saddles, bags, hats, etc.; paper has been made of it at Dorchester in this State, and cattle eat it when tender. It has heads somewhat like rye, from six inches to a foot in length, and it is propagated both by roots and seeds. To express its love for sand, some botanists have called it *Psamma arenaria*, which is the Greek for sand, qualified by the Latin for sandy, — or sandy sand. As it is blown about by the wind, while it is held fast by its roots, it describes myriad circles in the sand as accurately as if they were made by compasses.

It was the dreariest scenery imaginable. The only animals which we saw on the sand at that time were spiders, — which are to be found almost everywhere, whether on snow or ice, water or sand, — and a venomous-looking long narrow worm, one of the myriapods,

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or thousand-legs. We were surprised to see spider-holes in that flowing sand with an edge as firm as that of a stoned well.

In June this sand was scored with the tracks of turtles both large and small, which had been out in the night, leading to and from the swamps. I was told by a *terrae filius* who has a "farm" on the edge of the desert, and is familiar with the fame of Provincetown, that one man had caught twenty-five snapping turtles there the previous spring. His own method of catching them was to put a toad on a mackerel-hook and cast it into a pond, tying the line to a stump or stake on shore. Invariably the turtle when hooked crawled up the line to the stump, and was found waiting there by his captor, however long afterward. He also said that minks, muskrats, foxes, coons, and wild mice were found there, but no squirrels. We heard of sea-turtles as large as a barrel being found on the beach and on East Harbor marsh, but whether they were native there, or had been lost out of some vessel, did not appear. Perhaps they were the salt-water terrapin, or else the smooth terrapin, found thus far north. Many toads were met with where there was nothing but sand and beach-grass. In Truro I had been surprised at the number of large light-colored toads everywhere hopping over the dry and sandy fields, their color corresponding to that of the sand. Snakes also are common on these pure sand beaches, and I have never been so much troubled by mosquitoes as in such localities. At the same season strawberries grew there abundantly in the little hollows on the edge of the desert, standing amid the beach-grass in the sand, and the

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fruit of the shad-bush or amelanchier, which the inhabitants call josh-pears (some think from juicy), is very abundant on the hills. I fell in with an obliging man who conducted me to the best locality for strawberries. He said that he would not have shown me the place if he had not seen that I was a stranger, and could not anticipate him another year; I therefore feel bound in honor not to reveal it. When we came to a pond, he, being the native, did the honors and carried me over on his shoulders, like Sindbad. One good turn deserves another, and if he ever comes our way, I will do as much for him.

In one place we saw numerous dead tops of trees projecting through the otherwise uninterrupted desert, where, as we afterward learned, thirty or forty years before a flourishing forest had stood, and now, as the trees were laid bare from year to year, the inhabitants cut off their tops for fuel.

We saw nobody that day outside of the town; it was too wintry for such as had seen the Back Side before, or for the greater number who never desire to see it, to venture out; and we saw hardly a track to show that any had ever crossed this desert. Yet I was told that some are always out on the Back Side night and day in severe weather, looking for wrecks, in order that they may get the job of discharging the cargo, or the like; and thus shipwrecked men are succored. But, generally speaking, the inhabitants rarely visit these sands. One who had lived in Provincetown thirty years told me that he had not been through to the north side within that time. Sometimes the natives themselves come near

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perishing by losing their way in snow-storms behind the town.

The wind was not a sirocco or simoon, such as we associate with the desert, but a New England northeaster, — and we sought shelter in vain under the sand-hills, for it blew all about them, rounding them into cones, and was sure to find us out on whichever side we sat. From time to time we lay down and drank at little pools in the sand, filled with pure, fresh water, all that was left, probably, of a pond or swamp. The air was filled with dust like snow, and cutting sand which made the face tingle, and we saw what it must be to face it when the weather was drier, and, if possible, windier still, — to face a migrating sand-bar in the air, which has picked up its duds and is off, — to be whipped with a cat, not o' nine-tails, but of a myriad of tails, and each one a sting to it. A Mr. Whitman, a former minister of Wellfleet, used to write to his inland friends that the blowing sand scratched the windows so that he was obliged to have one new pane set every week, that he might see out.

On the edge of the shrubby woods the sand had the appearance of an inundation which was overwhelming them, terminating in an abrupt bank many feet higher than the surface on which they stood, and having partially buried the outside trees. The moving sand-hills of England, called dunes or downs, to which these have been likened, are either formed of sand cast up by the sea, or of sand taken from the land itself in the first place by the wind, and driven still farther inward. It is here a tide of sand impelled by waves and wind,

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slowly flowing from the sea toward the town. The northeast winds are said to be the strongest, but the northwest to move most sand, because they are the driest. On the shore of the Bay of Biscay, many villages were formerly destroyed in this way. Some of the ridges of beach-grass which we saw were planted by government many years ago, to preserve the harbor of Provincetown and the extremity of the Cape. I talked with some who had been employed in the planting. In the "Description of the Eastern Coast," which I have already referred to, it is said: "Beach grass, during the spring and summer, grows about two feet and a half. If surrounded by naked beach, the storms of autumn and winter heap up the sand on all sides, and cause it to rise nearly to the top of the plant. In the ensuing spring the grass sprouts anew; is again covered with sand in the winter; and thus a hill or ridge continues to ascend as long as there is a sufficient base to support it, or till the circumscribing sand, being also covered with beach grass, will no longer yield to the force of the winds." Sand-hills formed in this way are sometimes one hundred feet high and of every variety of form, like snow-drifts, or Arab tents, and are continually shifting. The grass roots itself very firmly. When I endeavored to pull it up, it usually broke off ten inches or a foot below the surface, at what had been the surface the year before, as appeared by the numerous offshoots there, it being a straight, hard, round shoot, showing by its length how much the sand had accumulated the last year; and sometimes the dead stubs of a previous season were pulled up with

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it from still deeper in the sand, with their own more decayed shoot attached; so that the age of a sand-hill, and its rate of increase for several years, are pretty accurately recorded in this way.

Old Gerard, the English herbalist, says (p. 1250): "I find mention in Stowe's Chronicle, in *Anno* 1555, of a certain pulse or pease, as they term it, wherewith the poor people at that time, there being a great dearth, were miraculously helped; he thus mentions it. In the month of August (saith he), in Suffolke, at a place by the sea side all of hard stone and pibble, called in those parts a shelf, lying between the towns of Orford and Aldborough, where neither grew grass nor any earth was ever seen; it chanced in this barren place suddenly to spring up without any tillage or sowing, great abundance of peason, whereof the poor gathered (as men judged) above one hundred quarters, yet remained some ripe and some blossoming, as many as ever there were before; to the which place rode the Bishop of Norwich and the Lord Willoughby, with others in great number, who found nothing but hard, rocky stone the space of three yards under the roots of these peason, which roots were great and long, and very sweet." He tells us also that Gesner learned from Dr. Cajus that there were enough there to supply thousands of men. He goes on to say that "they without doubt grew there many years before, but were not observed till hunger made them take notice of them, and quickened their invention, which commonly in our people is very dull, especially in finding out food of this nature. My worshipful friend Dr. Argent hath told me

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that many years ago he was in this place, and caused his man to pull among the beach with his hands, and follow the roots so long until he got some equal in length unto his height, yet could come to no ends of them." Gerard never saw them, and is not certain what kind they were.

In Dwight's "Travels in New England" it is stated that the inhabitants of Truro were formerly regularly warned under the authority of law in the month of April yearly, to plant beach-grass, as elsewhere they are warned to repair the highways. They dug up the grass in bunches, which were afterward divided into several smaller ones, and set about three feet apart, in rows, so arranged as to break joints and obstruct the passage of the wind. It spread itself rapidly, the weight of the seeds when ripe bending the heads of the grass, and so dropping directly by its side and vegetating there. In this way, for instance, they built up again that part of the Cape between Truro and Provincetown where the sea broke over in the last century. They have now a public road near there, made by laying sods, which were full of roots, bottom upward and close together on the sand, double in the middle of the track, then spreading brush evenly over the sand on each side for half a dozen feet, planting beach-grass on the banks in regular rows, as above described, and sticking a fence of brush against the hollows.

The attention of the general government was first attracted to the danger which threatened Cape Cod Harbor from the inroads of the sand, about thirty years ago, and commissioners were at that time appointed by

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Massachusetts to examine the premises. They reported in June, 1825, that, owing to "the trees and brush having been cut down, and the beach-grass destroyed on the seaward side of the Cape, opposite the Harbor," the original surface of the ground had been broken up and removed by the wind toward the Harbor, — during the previous fourteen years, — over an extent of "one half a mile in breadth, and about four and a half miles in length." — "The space where a few years since were some of the highest lands on the Cape, covered with trees and bushes," presenting "an extensive waste of undulating sand;" — and that, during the previous twelve months, the sand "had approached the Harbor an average distance of fifty rods, for an extent of four and a half miles!" and unless some measures were adopted to check its progress, it would in a few years destroy both the harbor and the town. They therefore recommended that beach-grass be set out on a curving line over a space ten rods wide and four and a half miles long, and that cattle, horses, and sheep be prohibited from going abroad, and the inhabitants from cutting the brush.

I was told that about thirty thousand dollars in all had been appropriated to this object, though it was complained that a great part of it was spent foolishly, as the public money is wont to be. Some say that while the government is planting beach-grass behind the town for the protection of the harbor, the inhabitants are rolling the sand into the harbor in wheelbarrows, in order to make house-lots. The Patent Office has recently imported the seed of this grass from

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Holland, and distributed it over the country, but probably we have as much as the Hollanders.

Thus Cape Cod is anchored to the heavens, as it were, by a myriad little cables of beach-grass, and, if they should fail, would become a total wreck, and ere long go to the bottom. Formerly, the cows were permitted to go at large, and they ate many strands of the cable by which the Cape is moored, and well-nigh set it adrift, as the bull did the boat which was moored with a grass rope; but now they are not permitted to wander.

A portion of Truro which has considerable taxable property on it has lately been added to Provincetown, and I was told by a Truro man that his townsmen talked of petitioning the legislature to set off the next mile of their territory also to Provincetown, in order that she might have her share of the lean as well as the fat, and take care of the road through it; for its whole value is literally to hold the Cape together, and even this it has not always done. But Provincetown strenuously declines the gift.

The wind blowed so hard from the northeast, that, cold as it was, we resolved to see the breakers on the Atlantic side, whose din we had heard all the morning; so we kept on eastward through the desert, till we struck the shore again northeast of Provincetown, and exposed ourselves to the full force of the piercing blast. There are extensive shoals there over which the sea broke with great force. For half a mile from the shore it was one mass of white breakers, which, with the wind, made such a din that we could hardly hear ourselves speak.

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Of this part of the coast it is said: "A northeast storm, the most violent and fatal to seamen, as it is frequently accompanied with snow, blows directly on the land: a strong current sets along the shore: add to which that ships, during the operation of such a storm, endeavor to work northward, that they may get into the bay. Should they be unable to weather Race Point, the wind drives them on the shore, and a shipwreck is inevitable. Accordingly, the strand is everywhere covered with the fragments of vessels." But since the Highland Light was erected, this part of the coast is less dangerous, and it is said that more shipwrecks occur south of that light, where they were scarcely known before.

This was the stormiest sea that we witnessed, — more *tumultuous*, my companion affirmed, than the rapids of Niagara, and, of course, on a far greater scale. It was the ocean in a gale, a clear, cold day, with only one sail in sight, which labored much, as if it were anxiously seeking a harbor. It was high tide when we reached the shore, and in one place, for a considerable distance, each wave dashed up so high that it was difficult to pass between it and the bank. Further south, where the bank was higher, it would have been dangerous to attempt it. A native of the Cape has told me, that many years ago, three boys, his playmates, having gone to this beach in Wellfleet to visit a wreck, when the sea receded ran down to the wreck, and when it came in ran before it to the bank, but the sea following fast at their heels, caused the bank to cave and bury them alive.

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It was the roaring sea, *θάλασσα ἠχήεσσα*, —

ἀμφὶ δὲ τ' ἄκραι
Ἠϊόνες βοόωσιν, ἐρευγομένης ἁλὸς ἔξω.

And the summits of the bank
Around resound, the sea being vomited forth.

As we stood looking on this scene we were gradually convinced that fishing here and in a pond were not, in all respects, the same, and that he who waits for fair weather and a calm sea may never see the glancing skin of a mackerel, and get no nearer to a cod than the wooden emblem in the State House.

Having lingered on the shore till we were well-nigh chilled to death by the wind, and were ready to take shelter in a Charity-house, we turned our weather-beaten faces toward Provincetown and the Bay again, having now more than doubled the Cape.

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PROVINCETOWN

EARLY the next morning I walked into a fish-house near our hotel, where three or four men were engaged in trundling out the pickled fish on barrows, and spreading them to dry. They told me that a vessel had lately come in from the Banks with forty-four thousand cod-fish. Timothy Dwight says that, just before he arrived at Provincetown, "a schooner came in from the Great Bank with fifty-six thousand fish, almost one thousand five hundred quintals, taken in a single voyage; the main deck being, on her return, eight inches under water in calm weather." The cod in this fish-house, just out of the pickle, lay packed several feet deep, and three or four men stood on them in cowhide boots, pitching them on to the barrows with an instrument which had a single iron point. One young man, who chewed tobacco, spat on the fish repeatedly. Well, sir, thought I, when that older man sees you he will speak to you. But presently I saw the older man do the same thing. It reminded me of the figs of Smyrna. "How long does it take to cure these fish?" I asked.

"Two good drying days, sir," was the answer.

I walked across the street again into the hotel to breakfast, and mine host inquired if I would take "hashed fish or beans." I took beans, though they never were a favorite dish of mine. I found next sum-

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mer that this was still the only alternative proposed here, and the landlord was still ringing the changes on these two words. In the former dish there was a remarkable proportion of fish. As you travel inland the potato predominates. It chanced that I did not taste fresh fish of any kind on the Cape, and I was assured that they were not so much used there as in the country. That is where they are cured, and where, sometimes, travelers are cured of eating them. No fresh meat was slaughtered in Provincetown, but the little that was used at the public houses was brought from Boston by the steamer.

A great many of the houses here were surrounded by fish-flakes close up to the sills on all sides, with only a narrow passage two or three feet wide, to the front door; so that instead of looking out into a flower or grass plot, you looked on to so many square rods of cod turned wrong side outwards. These parterres were said to be least like a flower-garden in a good drying day in midsummer. There were flakes of every age and pattern, and some so rusty and overgrown with lichens that they looked as if they might have served the founders of the fishery here. Some had broken down under the weight of successive harvests. The principal employment of the inhabitants at this time seemed to be to trundle out their fish and spread them in the morning, and bring them in at night. I saw how many a loafer who chanced to be out early enough, got a job at wheeling out the fish of his neighbor who was anxious to improve the whole of a fair day. Now then I knew where salt fish were caught. They were every-

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where lying on their backs, their collar-bones standing out like the lapels of a man-o'-war's-man's jacket, and inviting all things to come and rest in their bosoms; and all things, with a few exceptions, accepted the invitation. I think, by the way, that if you should wrap a large salt fish round a small boy, he would have a coat of such a fashion as I have seen many a one wear to muster. Salt fish were stacked up on the wharves, looking like corded wood, maple and yellow birch with the bark left on. I mistook them for this at first, and such in one sense they were, — fuel to maintain our vital fires, — an Eastern wood which grew on the Grand Banks. Some were stacked in the form of huge flower-pots, being laid in small circles with the tails outwards, each circle successively larger than the preceding until the pile was three or four feet high, when the circles rapidly diminished, so as to form a conical roof. On the shores of New Brunswick this is covered with birch-bark, and stones are placed upon it, and, being thus rendered impervious to the rain, it is left to season before being packed for exportation.

It is rumored that in the fall the cows here are sometimes fed on cod's heads! The godlike part of the cod, which, like the human head, is curiously and wonderfully made, forsooth has but little less brain in it, — coming to such an end! to be craunched by cows! I felt my own skull crack from sympathy. What if the heads of men were to be cut off to feed the cows of a superior order of beings who inhabit the islands in the ether? Away goes your fine brain, the house of thought and instinct, to swell the cud of a ruminant animal! — How-

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ever, an inhabitant assured me that they did not make a practice of feeding cows on cod's heads; the cows merely *would* eat them sometimes, but I might live there all my days and never see it done. A cow wanting salt would also sometimes lick out all the soft part of a cod on the flakes. This he would have me believe was the foundation of this fish-story.

It has been a constant traveler's tale and perhaps slander, now for thousands of years, the Latins and Greeks have repeated it, that this or that nation feeds its cattle, or horses, or sheep, on fish, as may be seen in Ælian and Pliny, but in the Journal of Nearchus, who was Alexander's admiral, and made a voyage from the Indus to the Euphrates three hundred and twenty-six years before Christ, it is said that the inhabitants of a portion of the intermediate coast, whom he called Ichthyophagi or Fish-eaters, not only ate fishes raw and also dried and pounded in a whale's vertebra for a mortar and made into a paste, but gave them to their cattle, there being no grass on the coast; and several modern travelers, — Braybosa, Niebuhr, and others make the same report. Therefore in balancing the evidence I am still in doubt about the Provincetown cows. As for other domestic animals, Captain King, in his continuation of Captain Cook's Journal in 1779, says of the dogs of Kamtschatka, "Their food in the winter consists entirely of the head, entrails, and back-bones of salmon, which are put aside and dried for that purpose; and with this diet they are fed but sparingly." [1]

[1] Cook's *Journal*, vol. vii, p. 315.

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As we are treating of fishy matters, let me insert what Pliny says, — that "the commanders of the fleets of Alexander the Great have related that the Gedrosi, who dwell on the banks of the river Arabis, are in the habit of making the doors of their houses with the jawbones of fishes, and raftering the roofs with their bones." Strabo tells the same of the Ichthyophagi. "Hardouin remarks, that the Basques of his day were in the habit of fencing their gardens with the ribs of the whale, which sometimes exceeded twenty feet in length; and Cuvier says, that at the present time the jawbone of the whale is used in Norway for the purpose of making beams or posts for buildings." [1] Herodotus says the inhabitants on Lake Prasias in Thrace (living on piles), "give fish for fodder to their horses and beasts of burden."

Provincetown was apparently what is called a flourishing town. Some of the inhabitants asked me if I did not think that they appeared to be well off generally. I said that I did, and asked how many there were in the almshouse. "Oh, only one or two, infirm or idiotic," answered they. The outward aspect of the houses and shops frequently suggested a poverty which their interior comfort and even richness disproved. You might meet a lady daintily dressed in the Sabbath morning, wading in among the sand-hills, from church, where there appeared no house fit to receive her, yet no doubt the interior of the house answered to the exterior of the lady. As for the interior of the inhabitants I am still in the dark about it. I had a little intercourse with some

[1] Bohn's ed. trans. of Pliny, vol. ii, p. 361.

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whom I met in the street, and was often agreeably disappointed by discovering the intelligence of rough, and what would be considered unpromising, specimens. Nay, I ventured to call on one citizen the next summer, by special invitation. I found him sitting in his front doorway, that Sabbath evening, prepared for me to come in unto him; but unfortunately for his reputation for keeping open house, there was stretched across his gateway a circular cobweb of the largest kind and quite entire. This looked so ominous that I actually turned aside and went in the back way.

This Monday morning was beautifully mild and calm, both on land and water, promising us a smooth passage across the Bay, and the fishermen feared that it would not be so good a drying day as the cold and windy one which preceded it. There could hardly have been a greater contrast. This was the first of the Indian summer days, though at a late hour in the morning we found the wells in the sand behind the town still covered with ice, which had formed in the night. What with wind and sun my most prominent feature fairly cast its slough. But I assure you it will take more than two good drying days to cure me of rambling. After making an excursion among the hills in the neighborhood of the Shank-Painter Swamp, and getting a little work done in its line, we took our seat upon the highest sand-hill overlooking the town, in mid-air, on a long plank stretched across between two hillocks of sand, where some boys were endeavoring in vain to fly their kite; and there we remained the rest of that forenoon, looking out over the placid harbor,

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and watching for the first appearance of the steamer from Wellfleet, that we might be in readiness to go on board when we heard the whistle off Long Point.

We got what we could out of the boys in the meanwhile. Provincetown boys are of course all sailors and have sailors' eyes. When we were at the Highland Light the last summer, seven or eight miles from Provincetown Harbor, and wished to know one Sunday morning if the Olata, a well-known yacht, had got in from Boston, so that we could return in her, a Provincetown boy about ten years old, who chanced to be at the table, remarked that she had. I asked him how he knew. "I just saw her come in," said he. When I expressed surprise that he could distinguish her from other vessels so far, he said that there were not so many of those two-topsail schooners about but that he could tell her. Palfrey said, in his oration at Barnstable, "The duck does not take to the water with a surer instinct than the Barnstable boy. [He might have said the Cape Cod boy as well.] He leaps from his leading-strings into the shrouds. It is but a bound from the mother's lap to the mast-head. He boxes the compass in his infant soliloquies. He can hand, reef, and steer, by the time he flies a kite."

This was the very day one would have chosen to sit upon a hill overlooking sea and land, and muse there. The mackerel fleet was rapidly taking its departure, one schooner after another, and standing round the Cape, like fowls leaving their roosts in the morning to disperse themselves in distant fields. The turtle-like sheds of the salt-works were crowded into every nook

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in the hills, immediately behind the town, and their now idle windmills lined the shore. It was worth the while to see by what coarse and simple chemistry this almost necessary of life is obtained, with the sun for journeyman, and a single apprentice to do the chores for a large establishment. It is a sort of tropical labor, pursued too in the sunniest season; more interesting than gold or diamond washing, which, I fancy, it somewhat resembles at a distance. In the production of the necessaries of life Nature is ready enough to assist man. So at the potash works which I have seen at Hull, where they burn the stems of the kelp and boil the ashes. Verily, chemistry is not a splitting of hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory. It is said, that owing to the reflection of the sun from the sand-hills, and there being absolutely no fresh water emptying into the harbor, the same number of superficial feet yields more salt here than in any other part of the country. A little rain is considered necessary to clear the air, and make salt fast and good, for as paint does not dry, so water does not evaporate, in dog-day weather. But they were now, as elsewhere on the Cape, breaking up their salt-works and selling them for lumber.

From that elevation we could overlook the operations of the inhabitants almost as completely as if the roofs had been taken off. They were busily covering the wickerwork flakes about their houses with salted fish, and we now saw that the back yards were improved for this purpose as much as the front; where one man's fish ended another's began. In almost every

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yard we detected some little building from which these treasures were being trundled forth and systematically spread, and we saw that there was an art as well as a knack even in spreading fish, and that a division of labor was profitably practiced. One man was withdrawing his fishes a few inches beyond the nose of his neighbor's cow, which had stretched her neck over a paling to get at them. It seemed a quite domestic employment, like drying clothes, and indeed in some parts of the county the women take part in it.

I noticed in several places on the Cape a sort of clothes-*flakes*. They spread brush on the ground, and fence it round, and then lay their clothes on it, to keep them from the sand. This is a Cape Cod clothes-yard.

The sand is the great enemy here. The tops of some of the hills were inclosed and a board put up forbidding all persons entering the inclosure, lest their feet should disturb the sand, and set it a-blowing or a-sliding. The inhabitants are obliged to get leave from the authorities to cut wood behind the town for fish-flakes, bean-poles, pea-brush, and the like, though, as we were told, they may transplant trees from one part of the township to another without leave. The sand drifts like snow, and sometimes the lower story of a house is concealed by it, though it is kept off by a wall. The houses were formerly built on piles, in order that the driving sand might pass under them. We saw a few old ones here still standing on their piles, but they were boarded up now, being protected by their younger neighbors. There was a schoolhouse, just under the

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hill on which we sat, filled with sand up to the tops of the desks, and of course the master and scholars had fled. Perhaps they had imprudently left the windows open one day, or neglected to mend a broken pane. Yet in one place was advertised "Fine sand for sale here," — I could hardly believe my eyes, — probably some of the street sifted, — a good instance of the fact that a man confers a value on the most worthless thing by mixing himself with it, according to which rule we must have conferred a value on the whole back side of Cape Cod; but I thought that if they could have advertised "Fat Soil," or perhaps "Fine sand got rid of," ay, and "Shoes emptied here," it would have been more alluring. As we looked down on the town, I thought that I saw one man, who probably lived beyond the extremity of the planking, steering and tacking for it in a sort of snow-shoes, but I may have been mistaken. In some pictures of Provincetown the persons of the inhabitants are not drawn below the ankles, so much being supposed to be buried in the sand. Nevertheless, natives of Provincetown assured me that they could walk in the middle of the road without trouble even in slippers, for they had learned how to put their feet down and lift them up without taking in any sand. One man said that he should be surprised if he found half a dozen grains of sand in his pumps at night, and stated, moreover, that the young ladies had a dexterous way of emptying their shoes at each step, which it would take a stranger a long time to learn. The tires of the stage-wheels were about five inches wide; and the wagon-tires generally on the Cape

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are an inch or two wider, as the sand is an inch or two deeper than elsewhere. I saw a baby's wagon with tires six inches wide to keep it near the surface. The more tired the wheels, the less tired the horses. Yet all the time that we were in Provincetown, which was two days and nights, we saw only one horse and cart, and they were conveying a coffin. They did not try such experiments there on common occasions. The next summer I saw only the two-wheeled horse-cart which conveyed me thirty rods into the harbor on my way to the steamer. Yet we read that there were two horses and two yoke of oxen here in 1791, and we were told that there were several more when we were there, beside the stage team. In Barber's "Historical Collections," it is said, "so rarely are wheel-carriages seen in the place that they are a matter of some curiosity to the younger part of the community. A lad who understood navigating the ocean much better than land travel, on seeing a man driving a wagon in the street, expressed his surprise at his being able to drive so straight without the assistance of a rudder." There was no rattle of carts, and there would have been no rattle if there had been any carts. Some saddle horses that passed the hotel in the evening merely made the sand fly with a rustling sound like a writer sanding his paper copiously, but there was no sound of their tread. No doubt there are more horses and carts there at present. A sleigh is never seen, or at least is a great novelty on the Cape, the snow being either absorbed by the sand or blown into drifts.

Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the Cape generally

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do not complain of their "soil," but will tell you that it is good enough for them to dry their fish on.

Notwithstanding all this sand, we counted three meeting-houses, and four schoolhouses nearly as large, on this street, though some had a tight board fence about them to preserve the plot within level and hard. Similar fences, even within a foot of many of the houses, gave the town a less cheerful and hospitable appearance than it would otherwise have had. They told us that, on the whole, the sand had made no progress for the last ten years, the cows being no longer permitted to go at large, and every means being taken to stop the sandy tide.

In 1727 Provincetown was "invested with peculiar privileges," for its encouragement. Once or twice it was nearly abandoned; but now lots on the street fetch a high price, though titles to them were first obtained by possession and improvement, and they are still transferred by quitclaim deeds merely, the township being the property of the State. But though lots were so valuable on the street, you might in many places throw a stone over them to where a man could still obtain land or sand by squatting on or improving it.

Stones are very rare on the Cape. I saw a very few small stones used for pavements and for bank walls, in one or two places in my walk, but they are so scarce, that, as I was informed, vessels have been forbidden to take them from the beach for ballast, and therefore their crews used to land at night and steal them. I did not hear of a rod of regular stone wall below Orleans. Yet I saw one man underpinning a new house in Eastham

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with some "rocks," as he called them, which he said a neighbor had collected with great pains in the course of years, and finally made over to him. This I thought was a gift worthy of being recorded, — equal to a transfer of California "rocks," almost. Another man who was assisting him, and who seemed to be a close observer of nature, hinted to me the locality of a rock in that neighborhood which was "forty-two paces in circumference and fifteen feet high," for he saw that I was a stranger, and, probably, would not carry it off. Yet I suspect that the locality of the few large rocks on the forearm of the Cape is well known to the inhabitants generally. I even met with one man who had got a smattering of mineralogy, but where he picked it up I could not guess. I thought that he would meet with some interesting geological nuts for him to crack, if he should ever visit the mainland, — Cohasset or Marblehead, for instance.

The well stones at the Highland Light were brought from Hingham, but the wells and cellars of the Cape are generally built of brick, which also are imported. The cellars, as well as the wells, are made in a circular form, to prevent the sand from pressing in the wall. The former are only from nine to twelve feet in diameter, and are said to be very cheap, since a single tier of brick will suffice for a cellar of even larger dimensions. Of course, if you live in the sand, you will not require a large cellar to hold your roots. In Provincetown, when formerly they suffered the sand to drive under their houses, obliterating all rudiment of a cellar, they did not raise a vegetable to put into one. One

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farmer in Wellfleet, who raised fifty bushels of potatoes, showed me his cellar under a corner of his house, not more than nine feet in diameter, looking like a cistern; but he had another of the same size under his barn.

You need dig only a few feet almost anywhere near the shore of the Cape to find fresh water. But that which we tasted was invariably poor, though the inhabitants called it good, as if they were comparing it with salt water. In the account of Truro, it is said, "Wells dug near the shore are dry at low water, or rather at what is called young flood, but are replenished with the flowing of the tide," — the salt water, which is lowest in the sand, apparently forcing the fresh up. When you express your surprise at the greenness of a Provincetown garden on the beach, in a dry season, they will sometimes tell you that the tide forces the moisture up to them. It is an interesting fact that low sand-bars in the midst of the ocean, perhaps even those which are laid bare only at low tide, are reservoirs of fresh water, at which the thirsty mariner can supply himself. They appear, like huge sponges, to hold the rain and dew which fall on them, and which, by capillary attraction, are prevented from mingling with the surrounding brine.

The harbor of Provincetown — which, as well as the greater part of the Bay, and a wide expanse of ocean, we overlooked from our perch — is deservedly famous. It opens to the south, is free from rocks, and is never frozen over. It is said that the only ice seen in it drifts in sometimes from Barnstable or Plymouth. Dwight remarks that "the storms which prevail on the Ameri-

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can coast generally come from the east; and there is no other harbor on a windward shore within two hundred miles." J. D. Graham, who has made a very minute and thorough survey of this harbor and the adjacent waters, states that "its capacity, depth of water, excellent anchorage, and the complete shelter it affords from all winds, combine to render it one of the most valuable ship harbors on our coast." It is *the* harbor of the Cape and of the fishermen of Massachusetts generally. It was known to navigators several years at least before the settlement of Plymouth. In Captain John Smith's map of New England, dated 1614, it bears the name of Milford Haven, and Massachusetts Bay that of Stuard's Bay. His Highness Prince Charles changed the name of Cape Cod to Cape James; but even princes have not always power to change a name for the worse, and, as Cotton Mather said, Cape Cod is "a name which I suppose it will never lose till shoals of codfish be seen swimming on its highest hills."

Many an early voyager was unexpectedly caught by this hook, and found himself embayed. On successive maps, Cape Cod appears sprinkled over with French, Dutch, and English names, as it made part of New France, New Holland, and New England. On one map Provincetown Harbor is called "Fuic (bow-net?) Bay," Barnstable Bay "Staten Bay," and the sea north of it "Mare del Noort," or the North Sea. On another, the extremity of the Cape is called "Staten Hoeck," or the States Hook. On another, by Young, this has Noord Zee, Staten hoeck, or Hit hoeck, but the copy at Cam-

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bridge has no date; the whole Cape is called "Niew Hollant" (after Hudson); and on another still, the shore between Race Point and Wood End appears to be called "Bevechier." In Champlain's admirable Map of New France, including the oldest recognizable map of what is now the New England coast with which I am acquainted, Cape Cod is called *C. Blan* (*i. e.*, Cape White), from the color of its sands, and Massachusetts Bay is *Baye Blanche*. It was visited by De Monts and Champlain in 1605, and the next year was further explored by Poitrincourt and Champlain. The latter has given a particular account of these explorations in his "Voyages," together with separate charts and soundings of two of its harbors, — *Malle Barre*, the Bad Bar (Nauset Harbor?), a name now applied to what the French called *Cap Baturier*, and *Port Fortune*, apparently Chatham Harbor. Both these names are copied on the map of "Novi Belgii," in Ogilby's America. He also describes minutely the manners and customs of the savages, and represents by a plate the savages surprising the French and killing five or six of them. The French afterward killed some of the natives, and wished, by way of revenge, to carry off some and make them grind in their hand-mill at Port Royal.

It is remarkable that there is not in English any adequate or correct account of the French exploration of what is now the coast of New England, between 1604 and 1608, though it is conceded that they then made the first permanent European settlement on the continent of North America north of St. Augustine. If the lions had been the painters it would have been otherwise.

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This omission is probably to be accounted for partly by the fact that the *early edition* of Champlain's "Voyages" had not been consulted for this purpose. This contains by far the most particular, and, I think, the most interesting chapter of what we may call the ante-Pilgrim history of New England, extending to one hundred and sixty pages quarto; but appears to be unknown equally to the historian and the orator on Plymouth Rock. Bancroft does not mention Champlain at all among the authorities for De Monts' expedition, nor does he say that he ever visited the coast of New England. Though he bore the title of pilot to De Monts, he was, in *another sense*, the leading spirit, as well as the historian of the expedition. Holmes, Hildreth, and Barry, and apparently all our historians who mention Champlain, refer to the edition of 1632, in which all the separate charts of our harbors, etc., and about one half the narrative, are omitted; for the author explored so many lands afterward that he could afford to forget a part of what he had done. Hildreth, speaking of De Monts' expedition, says that "he looked into the Penobscot [in 1605], which Pring had discovered two years before," saying nothing about Champlain's extensive exploration of it for De Monts in 1604 (Holmes says 1608, and refers to Purchas); also that he followed in the track of Pring along the coast "to Cape Cod, which he called Malabarre." (Haliburton had made the same statement before him in 1829. He called it Cap Blanc, and Malle Barre — the Bad Bar — was the name given to a harbor on the east side of the Cape.) Pring says nothing about a river there. Belknap says that Weymouth discovered

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it in 1605. Sir F. Gorges says, in his narration,[1] 1658, that Pring in 1606 "made a perfect discovery of all the rivers and harbors." This is the most I can find. Bancroft makes Champlain to have discovered more western rivers in Maine, not naming the Penobscot; he, however, must have been the discoverer of distances on this river.[2] Pring was absent from England only about six months, and sailed by this part of Cape Cod (Malebarre) because it yielded no sassafras, while the French, who probably had not heard of Pring, were patiently for years exploring the coast in search of a place of settlement, sounding and surveying its harbors.

John Smith's map, published in 1616, from observations in 1614–15, is by many regarded as the oldest map of New England. It is the first that was made after this country was called New England, for he so called it; but in Champlain's "Voyages," edition 1613 (and Lescarbot, in 1612, quotes a still earlier account of his voyage), there is a map of it made when it was known to Christendom as New France, called *Carte Géographique de la Nouvelle Franse faictte par le Sieur de Champlain Saint Tongois Cappitaine ordinaire pour le Roy en la Marine, — faict len* 1612, from his observations between 1604 and 1607; a map extending from Labrador to Cape Cod and westward *to the Great Lakes*, and crowded with information, geographical, ethnographical, zoölogical, and botanical. He even gives the variation of the compass as observed by himself at that date on many parts of the coast. This, taken together

[1] *Maine Hist. Coll.*, vol. ii, p. 19.

[2] See *Belknap*, p. 147.

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with the many *separate charts* of harbors and their soundings on a large scale, which this volume contains, — among the rest, *Qui ni be quy* (Kennebec), *Chouacoit R.* (Saco R.), *Le Beau port*, *Port St. Louis* (near Cape Ann), and others on our coast, — but *which are not in the edition of* 1632, makes this a completer map of the New England and adjacent northern coast than was made for half a century afterward; almost, we might be allowed to say, till another Frenchman, Des Barres, made another for us, which only our late Coast Survey has superseded. Most of the maps of this coast made for a long time after betray their indebtedness to Champlain. He was a skillful navigator, a man of science, and geographer to the King of France. He crossed the Atlantic about twenty times, and made nothing of it; often in a small vessel in which few would dare to go to sea to-day; and on one occasion making the voyage from Tadoussac to St. Malo in eighteen days. He was in this neighborhood, that is, between Annapolis, Nova Scotia, and Cape Cod, observing the land and its inhabitants, and making a map of the coast, from May, 1604, to September, 1607, *or about three and a half years*, and he has described minutely his method of surveying harbors. By his own account, a part of his map was engraved in 1604 (?). When Pont-Gravé and others returned to France in 1606, he remained at Port Royal with Poitrincourt, "in order," says he, "by the aid of God, to finish the chart of the coasts which I had begun;" and again in his volume, printed before John Smith visited this part of America, he says: "It seems to me that I have done my duty as far as I could, if I

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have not forgotten to put in my said chart whatever I saw, and give a particular knowledge to the public of what had never been described nor discovered so particularly as I have done it, although some other may have heretofore written of it; but it was a very small affair in comparison with what we have discovered within the last ten years."

It is not generally remembered, if known, by the descendants of the Pilgrims, that when their forefathers were spending their first memorable winter in the New World, they had for neighbors a colony of French no further off than Port Royal (Annapolis, Nova Scotia), three hundred miles distant (Prince seems to make it about five hundred miles); where, in spite of many vicissitudes, they had been for fifteen years. They built a grist-mill there as early as 1606; also made bricks and turpentine on a stream, Williamson says, in 1606. De Monts, who was a Protestant, brought his minister with him, who came to blows with the Catholic priest on the subject of religion. Though these founders of Acadie endured no less than the Pilgrims, and about the same proportion of them — thirty-five out of seventy-nine (Williamson's Maine says thirty-six out of seventy) — died the first winter at St. Croix, 1604–5, sixteen years earlier, no orator, to my knowledge, has ever celebrated their enterprise (Williamson's History of Maine does considerably), while the trials which their successors and descendants endured at the hands of the English have furnished a theme for both the historian and poet.[1] The remains of their fort at St. Croix were dis-

[1] See Bancroft's *History* and Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

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covered at the end of the last century, and helped decide where the true St. Croix, our boundary, was.

The very gravestones of those Frenchmen are probably older than the oldest English monument in New England north of the Elizabeth Islands, or perhaps anywhere in New England, for if there are any traces of Gosnold's storehouse left, his strong works are gone. Bancroft says, advisedly, in 1834, "It requires a believing eye to discern the ruins of the fort;" and that there were no ruins of a fort in 1837. Dr. Charles T. Jackson tells me that, in the course of a geological survey in 1827, he discovered a gravestone, a slab of trap rock, on Goat Island, opposite Annapolis (Port Royal), in Nova Scotia, bearing a Masonic coat-of-arms and the date 1606, which is fourteen years earlier than the landing of the Pilgrims. This was left in the possession of Judge Haliburton, of Nova Scotia.

There were Jesuit priests in what has since been called New England, converting the savages at Mount Desert, then St. Savior, in 1613, — having come over to Port Royal in 1611, though they were almost immediately interrupted by the English, years before the Pilgrims came hither to enjoy their own religion. This according to Champlain. Charlevoix says the same; and after coming from France in 1611, went west from Port Royal along the coast as far as the Kennebec in 1612, and was often carried from Port Royal to Mount Desert.

Indeed, the Englishman's history of New England commences only when it ceases to be New France. Though Cabot was the first to discover the continent

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of North America, Champlain, in the edition of his "Voyages" printed in 1632, after the English had for a season got possession of Quebec and Port Royal, complains with no little justice: "The common consent of all Europe is to represent New France as extending at least to the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth degrees of latitude, as appears by the maps of the world printed in Spain, Italy, Holland, Flanders, Germany, and England, until they possessed themselves of the coasts of New France, where are Acadie, the Etechemains [Maine and New Brunswick], the Almouchicois [Massachusetts?], and the great River St. Lawrence, where they have imposed, according to their fancy, such names as New England, Scotland, and others; but it is not easy to efface the memory of a thing which is known to all Christendom."

That Cabot merely landed on the uninhabitable shore of Labrador gave the English no just title to New England, or to the United States generally, any more than to Patagonia. His careful biographer (Biddle) is not certain in what voyage he ran down the coast of the United States, as is reported, and no one tells us what he saw. Miller (in the New York Hist. Coll., vol. i, p. 28), says he does not appear to have landed anywhere. Contrast with this Verrazzani's tarrying fifteen days at one place on the New England coast, and making frequent excursions into the interior thence. It chances that the latter's letter to Francis I, in 1524, contains "the earliest original account extant of the Atlantic coast of the United States;" and even from that time the northern part of it began to be

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called *La Terra Francese*, or French Land. A part of it was called New Holland before it was called New England. The English were very backward to explore and settle the continent which they had stumbled upon. The French preceded them both in their attempts to colonize the continent of North America (Carolina and Florida, 1562–64), and in their first permanent settlement (Port Royal, 1605); and the right of possession, naturally enough, was the one which England mainly respected and recognized in the case of Spain, of Portugal, and also of France, from the time of Henry VII.

The explorations of the French gave to the world the first valuable maps of these coasts. Denys of Honfleur made a map of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1506. No sooner had Cartier explored the St. Lawrence in 1535, than there began to be published by his countrymen remarkably accurate charts of that river as far up as Montreal. It is almost all of the continent north of Florida that you recognize on charts for more than a generation afterward, — though Verrazzani's rude plot (made under French auspices) was regarded by Hackluyt, more than fifty years after his voyage (in 1524), as the most accurate representation of our coast. The French trail is distinct. They went measuring and sounding, and when they got home had something to show for their voyages and explorations. There was no danger of their charts being lost, as Cabot's have been.

The most distinguished navigators of that day were Italians, or of Italian descent, and Portuguese. The French and Spaniards, though less advanced in the science of navigation than the former, possessed more

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imagination and spirit of adventure than the English, and were better fitted to be the explorers of a new continent even as late as 1751.

This spirit it was which so early carried the French to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi on the north, and the Spaniard to the same river on the south. It was long before our frontiers reached their settlements in the West, and a *voyageur* or *coureur de bois* is still our conductor there. Prairie is a French word, as Sierra is a Spanish one. St. Augustine in Florida and Santa Fé in New Mexico (1582), both built by the Spaniards, are considered the oldest towns in the United States. Within the memory of the oldest man, the Anglo-Americans were confined between the Appalachian Mountains and the sea, "a space not two hundred miles broad," while the Mississippi was by treaty the eastern boundary of New France.[1] So far as inland discovery was concerned, the adventurous spirit of the English was that of sailors who land but for a day, and their enterprise the enterprise of traders. Cabot spoke like an Englishman, as he was, if he said, as one reports, in reference to the discovery of the American continent, when he found it running toward the north, that it was a great disappointment to him, being in his way to India; but we would rather add to than detract from the fame of so great a discoverer.

Samuel Penhallow, in his History (Boston, 1726), p. 51, speaking of "Port Royal and Nova Scotia," says of the last, that its "first seizure was by Sir Sebastian

[1] See the pamphlet on settling the Ohio, London, 1763, bound up with the travels of Sir John Bartram.

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Cobbet for the crown of Great Britain, in the reign of King Henry VII; but lay dormant till the year 1621," when Sir William Alexander got a patent of it, and possessed it some years; and afterward Sir David Kirk was proprietor of it, but ere long, "to the surprise of all thinking men, it was given up unto the French."

Even as late as 1633 we find Winthrop, the first Governor of the Massachusetts Colony, who was not the most likely to be misinformed, — who, moreover, has the *fame*, at least, of having discovered Wachusett Mountain (discerned it forty miles inland), — talking about the "Great Lake" and the "hideous swamps about it," near which the Connecticut and the "Potomack" took their rise; and among the memorable events of the year 1642 he chronicles Darby Field, an Irishman's expedition to the "White hill," from whose top he saw eastward what he "judged to be the Gulf of Canada," and westward what he "judged to be the great lake which Canada River comes out of," and where he found much "Muscovy glass," and "could rive out pieces of forty feet long and seven or eight broad." While the very inhabitants of New England were thus fabling about the country a hundred miles inland, which was a *terra incognita* to them, — or rather many years before the earliest date referred to, — Champlain, the *first Governor of Canada*, not to mention the inland discoveries of Cartier,[1] Roberval, and others, of the preceding century, and his own earlier voyage, had

[1] It is remarkable that the first, if not the only, part of New England which Cartier saw was Vermont (he also saw the mountains of New York), from Montreal Mountain, in 1535, sixty-seven years

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already gone to war against the Iroquois in their forest forts, and penetrated to the Great Lakes and wintered there, before a Pilgrim had heard of New England. In Champlain's "Voyages," printed in 1613, there is a plate representing a fight in which he aided the Canada Indians against the Iroquois, near the south end of Lake Champlain, in July, 1609, eleven years before the settlement of Plymouth. Bancroft says he joined the Algonquins in an expedition against the Iroquois, or Five Nations, in the northwest of New York. This is that "Great Lake," which the English, hearing some rumor of from the French, long after, locate in an "Imaginary Province called Laconia, and spent several years about 1630 in the vain attempt to discover."[1] Thomas Morton has a chapter on this "Great Lake." In the edition of Champlain's map dated 1632, the Falls of Niagara appear; and in a great lake northwest of *Mer Douce* (Lake Huron) there is an island represented, over which is written, "*Isle ou il y a une mine de cuivre*," — "Island where there is a mine of copper." This will do for an offset to our Governor's "Muscovy glass." Of all these adventures and discoveries we have a minute and faithful account, giving facts and dates as well as charts and soundings, all scientific and Frenchman-like, with scarcely one fable or traveler's story.

before Gosnold saw Cape Cod. *If seeing is discovering*, — and that is *all* that it is proved that Cabot knew of the coast of the United States, — then Cartier (to omit Verrazzani and Gomez) was the discoverer of New England rather than Gosnold, who is commonly so styled.

[1] Sir Ferdinand Gorges, in *Maine Hist. Coll.*, vol. ii, p. 68.

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Probably Cape Cod was visited by Europeans long before the seventeenth century. It may be that Cabot himself beheld it. Verrazzani, in 1524, according to his own account, spent fifteen days on our coast, in latitude 41° 40′ (some suppose in the harbor of Newport), and often went five or six leagues into the interior there, and he says that he sailed thence at once one hundred and fifty leagues northeasterly, *always in sight of the coast.* There is a chart in Hackluyt's "Divers Voyages," made according to Verrazzani's plot, which last is praised for its accuracy by Hackluyt, but I cannot distinguish Cape Cod on it, unless it is the "C. Arenas," which is in the right latitude, though ten degrees west of "Claudia," which is thought to be Block Island.

The "Biographie Universelle" informs us that "an ancient manuscript chart drawn in 1529 by Diego Ribeiro, a Spanish cosmographer, has preserved the memory of the voyage of Gomez [a Portuguese sent out by Charles the Fifth]. One reads in it under (*au dessous*) the place occupied by the States of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, *Terre d'Etienne Gomez, qu'il découvrit en* 1525 (Land of Etienne Gomez, which he discovered in 1525)." This chart, with a memoir, was published at Weimar in the last century.

Jean Alphonse, Roberval's pilot in Canada in 1542, one of the most skillful navigators of his time, and who has given remarkably minute and accurate direction for sailing up the St. Lawrence, showing that he knows what he is talking about, says in his "Routier" (it is in Hackluyt), "I have been at a bay as far as the

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forty-second degree, between Norimbegue [the Penobscot?] and Florida, but I have not explored the bottom of it, and I do not know whether it passes from one land to the other," *i. e.*, to Asia. ("J'ai été à une Baye jusques par les 42° degrés entre la Norimbegue et la Floride; mais je n'en ai pas cherché le fond, et ne sçais pas si elle passe d'une terre à l'autre.") This may refer to Massachusetts Bay, if not possibly to the western inclination of the coast a little farther south. When he says, "I have no doubt that the Norimbegue enters into the river of Canada," he is perhaps so interpreting some account which the Indians had given respecting the route from the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic, by the St. John, or Penobscot, or possibly even the Hudson River.

We hear rumors of this country of "Norumbega" and its great city from many quarters. In a discourse by a great French sea-captain in Ramusio's third volume (1556–65), this is said to be the name given to the land by its inhabitants, and Verrazzani is called the discoverer of it; another in 1607 makes the natives call it, or the river, Aguncia. It is represented as an island on an accompanying chart. It is frequently spoken of by old writers as a country of indefinite extent, between Canada and Florida, and it appears as a large island with Cape Breton at its eastern extremity, on the map made according to Verrazzani's plot in Hackluyt's "Divers Voyages." These maps and rumors may have been the origin of the notion, common among the early settlers, that New England was an island. The country and city of Norumbega appear about where Maine

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now is on a map in Ortelius ("Theatrum Orbis Terrarum," Antwerp, 1570), and the "R. Grande" is drawn where the Penobscot or St. John might be.

In 1604, Champlain being sent by the Sieur de Monts to explore the coast of Norembegue, sailed up the Penobscot twenty-two or twenty-three leagues from "Isle Haute," or till he was stopped by the falls. He says: "I think that this river is that which many pilots and historians call Norembegue, and which the greater part have described as great and spacious, with numerous islands; and its entrance in the forty-third or forty-third and one half, or, according to others, the forty-fourth degree of latitude, more or less." He is convinced that "the greater part" of those who speak of a great city there have never seen it, but repeat a mere rumor, but he thinks that some have seen the mouth of the river, since it answers to their description.

Under date of 1607 Champlain writes, "Three or four leagues north of the Cap de Poitrincourt [near the head of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia] we found a cross, which was very old, covered with moss and almost all decayed, which was an evident sign that there had formerly been Christians there."

Also the following passage from Lescarbot will show how much the neighboring coasts were frequented by Europeans in the sixteenth century. Speaking of his return from Port Royal to France in 1607, he says: "At last, within four leagues of Campseau [the Gut of Canso], we arrived at a harbor [in Nova Scotia], where a worthy old gentleman from St. John de Lus, named Captain Savale, was fishing, who received us with the

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utmost courtesy. And as this harbor, which is small, but very good, has no name, I have given it on my geographical chart the name of Savalet. [It is on Champlain's map also.] This worthy man told us that this voyage was the forty-second which he had made to those parts, and yet the Newfoundlanders [*Terre neuviers*] make only one a year. He was wonderfully content with his fishery, and informed us that he made daily fifty crowns' worth of cod, and that his voyage would be worth ten thousand francs. He had sixteen men in his employ; and his vessel was of eighty tons, which could carry a hundred thousand dry cod."[1] They dried their fish on the rocks on shore.

The "Isola della Rena" (Sable Island?) appears on the chart of "Nuova Francia" and Norumbega, accompanying the "Discourse" above referred to in Ramusio's third volume, edition 1556–65. Champlain speaks of there being at the Isle of Sable, in 1604, "grass pastured by oxen (*bœufz*) and cows which the Portuguese carried there more than sixty years ago," *i.e.*, sixty years before 1613; in a later edition he says, which came out of a Spanish vessel which was lost in endeavoring to settle on the Isle of Sable; and he states that De la Roche's men, who were left on this island seven years from 1598, lived on the flesh of these cattle which they found "*en quantité*," and built houses out of the wrecks of vessels which came to the island ("perhaps Gilbert's"), there being no wood or stone. Lescarbot says that they lived "on fish and the milk of cows left there about eighty years before by Baron

[1] *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, 1612.

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de Leri and Saint Just." Charlevoix says they ate up the cattle and then lived on fish. Haliburton speaks of cattle left there as a rumor. De Leri and Saint Just had suggested plans of colonization on the Isle of Sable as early as 1515 (1508?) according to Bancroft, referring to Charlevoix. These are but a few of the instances which I might quote.

Cape Cod is commonly said to have been discovered in 1602. We will consider at length under what circumstances, and with what observation and expectations, the first Englishmen whom history clearly discerns approached the coast of New England. According to the accounts of Archer and Brereton (both of whom accompanied Gosnold), on the 26th of March, 1602, old style, Captain Bartholomew Gosnold set sail from Falmouth, England, for the North Part of Virginia, in a small bark called the Concord, they being in all, says one account, "thirty-two persons, whereof eight mariners and sailors, twelve purposing upon the discovery to return with the ship for England, the rest remain there for population." This is regarded as "the first attempt of the English to make a settlement within the limits of New England." Pursuing a new and a shorter course than the usual one by the Canaries, "the 14th of April following they had sight of Saint Mary's, an island of the Azores." As their sailors were few and "none of the best" (I use their own phrases), and they were "going upon an unknown coast," they were not "over-bold to stand in with the shore but in open weather;" so they made their first discovery of land with the lead. The 23d of April the ocean ap-

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peared yellow, but on taking up some of the water in a bucket, "it altered not either in color or taste from the sea azure." The 7th of May they saw divers birds whose names they knew, and many others in their "English tongue of no name." The 8th of May "the water changed to a yellowish green, where at seventy fathoms" they "had ground." The 9th, they had upon their lead "many glittering stones," — "which might promise some mineral matter in the bottom." The 10th, they were over a bank which they thought to be near the western end of St. John's Island, and saw schools of fish. The 12th, they say, "continually passed fleeting by us sea-oare, which seemed to have their movable course towards the northeast." On the 13th they observed "great beds of weeds, much wood, and divers things else floating by," and "had smelling of the shore much as from the southern Cape and Andalusia in Spain." On Friday, the 14th, early in the morning they descried land on the north, in the latitude of forty-three degrees, apparently some part of the coast of Maine. Williamson[1] says it certainly could not have been south of the central Isle of Shoals. Belknap inclines to think it the south side of Cape Ann. Standing fair along by the shore, about twelve o'clock the same day, they came to anchor and were visited by eight savages, who came off to them "in a Biscay shallop, with sail and oars," — "an iron grapple, and a kettle of copper." These they at first mistook for "Christians distressed." One of them was "apparelled with a waistcoat and breeches

[1] *History of Maine.*

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of black serge, made after our sea-fashion, hoes and shoes on his feet; all the rest (saving one that had a pair of breeches of blue cloth) were naked." They appeared to have had dealings with "some Basques of St. John de Luz, and to understand much more than we," say the English, "for want of language, could comprehend." But they soon "set sail westward, leaving them and their coast." (This was a remarkable discovery for discoverers.)

"The 15th day," writes Gabriel Archer, "we had again sight of the land, which made ahead, being as we thought an island, by reason of a large sound that appeared westward between it and the main, for coming to the west end thereof, we did perceive a large opening, we called it Shoal Hope. Near this cape we came to anchor in fifteen fathoms, where we took great store of cod-fish, for which we altered the name and called it Cape Cod. Here we saw skulls of herring, mackerel, and other small fish, in great abundance. This is a low, sandy shoal, but without danger; also we came to anchor again in sixteen fathoms, fair by the land in the latitude of forty-two degrees. This Cape is well near a mile broad, and lieth northeast by east. The Captain went here ashore, and found the ground to be full of peas, strawberries, whortleberries, etc., as then unripe, the sand also by the shore somewhat deep; the firewood there by us taken in was of cypress, birch, witch-hazel, and beach. A young Indian came here to the captain, armed with his bow and arrows, and had certain plates of copper hanging at his ears; he showed a willingness to help us in our occasions."

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"The 16th we trended the coast southerly, which was all champaign and full of grass, but the islands somewhat woody."

Or, according to the account of John Brereton, "riding here," that is, where they first communicated with the natives, "in no very good harbor, and withal doubting the weather, about three of the clock the same day in the afternoon we weighed, and standing southerly off into sea the rest of that day and the night following, with a fresh gale of wind, in the morning we found ourselves embayed with a mighty headland; but coming to an anchor about nine of the clock the same day, within a league of the shore, we hoisted out the one half of our shallop, and Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, myself and three others, went ashore, being a white sandy and very bold shore; and marching all that afternoon with our muskets on our necks, on the highest hills which we saw (the weather very hot) at length we perceived this headland to be parcel of the main, and sundry islands lying almost round about it; so returning towards evening to our shallop (for by that time the other part was brought ashore and set together), we espied an Indian, a young man of proper stature, and of a pleasing countenance, and after some familiarity with him, we left him at the sea side, and returned to our ship, where in five or six hours' absence we had pestered our ship so with codfish, that we threw numbers of them overboard again; and surely I am persuaded that in the months of March, April, and May, there is upon this coast better fishing, and in as great plenty, as in Newfoundland; for the skulls of mackerel, herring, cod,

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and other fish, that we daily saw as we went and came from the shore, were wonderful," etc.

"From this place we sailed round about this headland, almost all the points of the compass, the shore very bold; but as no coast is free from dangers, so I am persuaded this is as free as any. The land somewhat low, full of goodly woods, but in some places plain."

It is not quite clear on which side of the Cape they landed. If it was inside, as would appear from Brereton's words, "From this place we sailed round about this headland almost all the points of the compass," it must have been on the western shore either of Truro or Wellfleet. To one sailing south into Barnstable Bay along the Cape, the only "white, sandy, and very bold shore" that appears is in these towns, though the bank is not so high there as on the eastern side. At a distance of four or five miles the sandy cliffs there look like a long fort of yellow sandstone, they are so level and regular, especially in Wellfleet, — the fort of the land defending itself against the encroachments of the ocean. They are streaked here and there with a reddish sand as if painted. Farther south the shore is more flat, and less *obviously* and abruptly sandy, and a little tinge of green here and there in the marshes appears to the sailor like a rare and precious emerald. But in the Journal of Pring's Voyage the next year (and Salterne, who was with Pring, had accompanied Gosnold) it is said, "Departing hence [*i. e.*, from Savage Rock] we bare into that great gulf which Captain Gosnold overshot the year before."[1]

[1] "Savage Rock," which some have supposed to be, from the name,

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So they sailed round the Cape, calling the south-easterly extremity "Point Cave," till they came to an island which they named Martha's Vineyard (now called No Man's Land), and another on which they dwelt awhile, which they named Elizabeth's Island, in honor of the queen, one of the group since so called, now known by its Indian name Cuttyhunk. There they built a small storehouse, the first house built by the English in New England, whose cellar could recently still be seen, made partly of stones taken from the beach. Bancroft says (edition of 1837) the ruins of the fort can no longer be discerned. They who were to have remained becoming discontented, all together set sail for England, with a load of sassafras and other commodities, on the 18th of June following.

The next year came Martin Pring, looking for sassafras, and thereafter they began to come thick and fast, until long after sassafras had lost its reputation.

These are the oldest accounts which we have of Cape Cod, unless, perchance, Cape Cod is, as some suppose, the same with that "Kial-ar-nes" or Keel-Cape, on which, according to old Icelandic manuscripts, Thorwald, son of Eric the Red, after sailing many days southwest from Greenland, broke his keel in the year 1004; and where, according to another, in some respects less trustworthy, manuscript, Thor-finn Karlsefue ("that

the *Salvages*, a ledge about two miles off Rockport, Cape Ann, was probably the *Nubble*, a large, high rock near the shore, on the east side of York Harbor, Maine. The first land made by Gosnold is presumed by experienced navigators to be Cape Elizabeth on the same coast. (See Babson's *History of Gloucester, Massachusetts.*)

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is, one who promises or is destined to be an able or great man;" he is said to have had a son born in New England, from whom Thorwaldsen the sculptor was descended), sailing past, in the year 1007, with his wife Gudrida, Snorre Thorbrandson, Biarne Grinolfson, and Thorhall Garnlason, distinguished Norsemen, in three ships containing "one hundred and sixty men and all sorts of live stock" (probably the first Norway rats among the rest), having the land "on the right side" of them, "roved ashore," and found "*Or-aefi* (trackless deserts)," and "*Strand-ir lang-ar ok sand-ar* (long, narrow beaches and sand-hills)," and "called the shores *Furdu-strand-ir* (Wonder Strands), because the sailing by them seemed long."

According to the Icelandic manuscripts, *Thorwald* was the first, then, — unless possibly one Biarne Heriulfson (*i. e.*, son of Heriulf) who had been seized with a great desire to travel, sailing from Iceland to Greenland in the year 986 to join his father who had migrated thither, — for he had resolved, says the manuscript, "to spend the following winter, like all the preceding ones, with his father," — being driven far to the southwest by a storm, when it cleared up saw the low land of Cape Cod looming faintly in the distance; but this not answering to the description of Greenland, he put his vessel about, and, sailing northward along the coast, at length reached Greenland and his father. At any rate, he may put forth a strong claim to be regarded as the discoverer of the American continent.

These Northmen were a hardy race, whose younger sons inherited the ocean, and traversed it without chart

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or compass, and they are said to have been "the first who learned the art of sailing on a wind." Moreover, they had a habit of casting their door-posts overboard and settling wherever they went ashore. But as Biarne, and Thorwald, and Thorfinn have not mentioned the latitude and longitude distinctly enough, though we have great respect for them as skillful and adventurous navigators, we must for the present remain in doubt as to what capes they did see. We think that they were considerably further north.

If time and space permitted, I could present the claims of several other worthy persons. Lescarbot, in 1609, asserts that the French sailors had been accustomed to frequent the Newfoundland Banks from time immemorial, "for the codfish with which they feed almost all Europe and supply all sea-going vessels," and accordingly "the language of the nearest lands is half Basque;" and he quotes Postel, a learned but extravagant French author, born in 1510, only six years after the Basques, Bretons, and Normans are said to have discovered the Grand Bank and adjacent islands, as saying, in his *Charte Géographique*, which we have not seen: "Terra haec ob lucrosissimam piscationis utilitatem summa litterarum memoria a Gallis adiri solita, et ante mille sexcentos annos frequentari solita est; sed eo quod sit urbibus inculta et vasta, spreta est." "This land, on account of its very lucrative fishery, was accustomed to be visited by the Gauls from the very dawn of history, and more than sixteen hundred years ago was accustomed to be frequented; but because it was unadorned with cities, and waste, it was despised."

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It is the old story. Bob Smith discovered the mine, but I discovered it to the world. And now Bob Smith is putting in his claim.

But let us not laugh at Postel and his visions. He was perhaps better posted up than we; and if he does seem to draw the long bow, it may be because he had a long way to shoot, — quite across the Atlantic. If America was found and lost again once, as most of us believe, then why not twice? especially as there were likely to be so few records of an earlier discovery. Consider what stuff history is made of, — that for the most part it is merely a story agreed on by posterity. Who will tell us even how many Russians were engaged in the battle of the Chernaya, the other day? Yet, no doubt, Mr. Scriblerus, the historian, will fix on a definite number for the schoolboys to commit to their excellent memories. What, then, of the number of Persians at Salamis? The historian whom I read knew as much about the position of the parties and their tactics in the last-mentioned affair as they who describe a recent battle in an article for the press nowadays before the particulars have arrived. I believe that, if I were to live the life of mankind over again myself (which I would not be hired to do), with the Universal History in my hands, I should not be able to tell what was what.

Earlier than the date Postel refers to, at any rate, Cape Cod lay in utter darkness to the civilized world, though even then the sun rose from eastward out of the sea every day, and, rolling over the Cape, went down westward into the Bay. It was even then Cape and

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Bay, — ay, the Cape of *Codfish*, and the Bay of the *Massachusetts*, perchance.

Quite recently, on the 11th of November, 1620, old style, as is well known, the Pilgrims in the Mayflower came to anchor in Cape Cod Harbor. They had loosed from Plymouth, England, the 6th of September, and, in the words of "Mourt's Relation," "after many difficulties in boisterous storms, at length, by God's providence, upon the 9th of November, we espied land, which we deemed to be Cape Cod, and so afterward it proved. Upon the 11th of November we came to anchor in the bay, which is a good harbor and pleasant bay, circled round except in the entrance, which is about four miles over from land to land, compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood. It is a harbor wherein a thousand sail of ships may safely ride. There we relieved ourselves with wood and water, and refreshed our people, while our shallop was fitted to coast the bay, to search for an habitation." There *we* put up at Fuller's Hotel, passing by the Pilgrim House as too high for us (we learned afterward that we need not have been so particular), and we refreshed ourselves with hashed fish and beans, beside taking in a supply of liquids (which were not intoxicating), while our legs were refitted to coast the Back Side. Further say the Pilgrims, "We could not come near the shore by three quarters of an English mile, because of shallow water; which was a great prejudice to us; for our people going on shore were forced to wade a bow-shot or two in going aland, which caused many to get colds and coughs; for it was many times freezing

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cold weather." They afterwards say, "It brought much weakness amongst us;" and no doubt it led to the death of some at Plymouth.

The harbor of Provincetown is very shallow near the shore, especially about the head, where the Pilgrims landed. When I left this place the next summer, the steamer could not get up to the wharf, but we were carried out to a large boat in a cart as much as thirty rods in shallow water, while a troop of little boys kept us company, wading around, and thence we pulled to the steamer by a rope. The harbor being thus shallow and sandy about the shore, coasters are accustomed to run in here to paint their vessels, which are left high and dry when the tide goes down.

It chanced that the Sunday morning that we were there, I had joined a party of men who were smoking and lolling over a pile of boards on one of the wharves (*nihil humanum a me*, etc.), when our landlord, who was a sort of tithing-man, went off to stop some sailors who were engaged in painting their vessel. Our party was recruited from time to time by other citizens, who came rubbing their eyes as if they had just got out of bed; and one old man remarked to me that it was the custom there to lie abed very late on Sunday, it being a day of rest. I remarked that, as I thought, they might as well let the man paint, for all us. It was not noisy work, and would not disturb our devotions. But a young man in the company, taking his pipe out of his mouth, said that it was a plain contradiction of the law of God, which he quoted, and if they did not have some such regulation, vessels would run in there

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to tar, and rig, and paint, and they would have no Sabbath at all. This was a good argument enough, if he had not put it in the name of religion. The next summer, as I sat on a hill there one sultry Sunday afternoon, the meeting-house windows being open, my meditations were interrupted by the noise of a preacher who shouted like a boatswain, profaning the quiet atmosphere, and who, I fancied, must have taken off his coat. Few things could have been more disgusting or disheartening. I wished the tithing-man would stop him.

The Pilgrims say, "There was the greatest store of fowl that ever we saw."

We saw no fowl there, except gulls of various kinds; but the greatest store of them that ever we saw was on a flat but slightly covered with water on the east side of the harbor, and we observed a man who had landed there from a boat creeping along the shore in order to get a shot at them, but they all rose and flew away in a great scattering flock, too soon for him, having apparently got their dinners, though he did not get his.

It is remarkable that the Pilgrims (or their reporter) describe this part of the Cape, not only as well wooded, but as having a deep and excellent soil, and hardly mention the word sand. Now what strikes the voyager is the barrenness and desolation of the land. They found "the ground or earth sand-hills, much like the downs in Holland, but much better; the crust of the earth, a spit's depth, excellent black earth." We found that the earth had lost its crust, — if, indeed, it ever had any, — and that there was no soil to speak of. We did not see enough black earth in Provincetown to fill

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a flower-pot, unless in the swamps. They found it "all wooded with oaks, pines, sassafras, juniper, birch, holly, vines, some ash, walnut; the wood for the most part open and without underwood, fit either to go or ride in." We saw scarcely anything high enough to be called a tree, except a little low wood at the east end of the town, and the few ornamental trees in its yards, — only a few small specimens of some of the above kinds on the sand-hills in the rear; but it was all thick shrubbery, without any large wood above it, very unfit either to go or ride in. The greater part of the land was a perfect desert of yellow sand, rippled like waves by the wind, in which only a little beach-grass grew here and there. They say that, just after passing the head of East Harbor Creek, the boughs and bushes "tore" their "very armor in pieces" (the same thing happened to such armor as we wore, when out of curiosity we took to the bushes); or they came to deep valleys, "full of brush, wood-gaile, and long grass," and "found springs of fresh water."

For the most part we saw neither bough nor bush, not so much as a shrub to tear our clothes against if we would, and a sheep would lose none of its fleece, even if it found herbage enough to make fleece grow there. We saw rather beach and poverty grass, and merely sorrel enough to color the surface. I suppose, then, by wood-gaile they mean the bayberry.

All accounts agree in affirming that this part of the Cape was comparatively well wooded a century ago. But notwithstanding the great changes which have taken place in these respects, I cannot but think that

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we must make some allowance for the greenness of the Pilgrims in these matters, which caused them to see green. We do not believe that the trees were large or the soil was deep here. Their account may be true particularly, but it is generally false. They saw literally, as well as figuratively, but one side of the Cape. They naturally exaggerated the fairness and attractiveness of the land, for they were glad to get to any land at all after that anxious voyage. Everything appeared to them of the color of the rose, and had the scent of juniper and sassafras. Very different is the general and off-hand account given by Captain John Smith, who was on this coast six years earlier, and speaks like an old traveler, voyager, and soldier, who had seen too much of the world to exaggerate, or even to dwell long on a part of it. In his "Description of New England," printed in 1616, after speaking of Accomack, since called Plymouth, he says: "Cape Cod is the next presents itself, which is only a headland of high hills of sand, overgrown with shrubby pines, hurts [*i. e.* whorts, or whortleberries], and such trash, but an excellent harbor for all weathers. This Cape is made by the main sea on the one side, and a great bay on the other, in form of a sickle." Champlain had already written, "Which we named *Cap Blanc* (Cape White), because they were sands and downs (*sables et dunes*) which appeared thus."

When the Pilgrims get to Plymouth their reporter says again, "The land for the crust of the earth is a spit's depth," — that would seem to be their recipe for an earth's crust, — "excellent black mould and

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fat in some places." However, according to Bradford himself, whom some consider the author of part of "Mourt's Relation," they who came over in the Fortune the next year were somewhat daunted when "they came into the harbor of Cape Cod, and there saw nothing but a naked and barren place." They soon found out their mistake with respect to the goodness of Plymouth soil. Yet when at length, some years later, when they were fully satisfied of the poorness of the place which they had chosen, "the greater part," says Bradford, "consented to a removal to a place called Nausett," they agreed to remove all together to Nauset, now Eastham, which was jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire; and some of the most respectable of the inhabitants of Plymouth did actually remove thither accordingly.

It must be confessed that the Pilgrims possessed but few of the qualities of the modern pioneer. They were not the ancestors of the American backwoodsmen. They did not go at once into the woods with their axes. They were a family and church, and were more anxious to keep together, though it were on the sand, than to explore and colonize a New World. When the above-mentioned company removed to Eastham, the church at Plymouth was left, to use Bradford's expression, "like an ancient mother grown old, and forsaken of her children." Though they landed on Clark's Island in Plymouth harbor, the 9th of December (O. S.), and the 16th all hands came to Plymouth, and the 18th they rambled about the mainland, and the 19th decided to settle there, it was the 8th of January before Fran-

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cis Billington went with one of the master's mates to look at the magnificent pond or lake now called "Billington Sea," about two miles distant, which he had discovered from the top of a tree, and mistook for a great sea. And the 7th of March "Master Carver with five others went to the great ponds which seem to be excellent fishing," both which points are within the compass of an ordinary afternoon's ramble, — however wild the country. It is true they were busy at first about their building, and were hindered in that by much foul weather; but a party of emigrants to California or Oregon, with no less work on their hands, — and more hostile Indians, — would do as much exploring the first afternoon, and the Sieur de Champlain would have sought an interview with the savages, and examined the country as far as the Connecticut, and made a map of it, before Billington had climbed his tree. Or contrast them only with the French searching for copper about the Bay of Fundy in 1603, tracing up small streams with Indian guides. Nevertheless, the Pilgrims were pioneers, and the ancestors of pioneers, in a far grander enterprise.

By this time we saw the little steamer Naushon entering the harbor, and heard the sound of her whistle, and came down from the hills to meet her at the wharf. So we took leave of Cape Cod and its inhabitants. We liked the manners of the last, what little we saw of them, very much. They were particularly downright and good-humored. The old people appeared remarkably well preserved, as if by the saltness of the atmosphere, and after having once mistaken, we could never

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be certain whether we were talking to a coeval of our grandparents, or to one of our own age. They are said to be more purely the descendants of the Pilgrims than the inhabitants of any other part of the State. We were told that "sometimes, when the court comes together at Barnstable, they have not a single criminal to try, and the jail is shut up." It was "to let" when we were there. Until quite recently there was no regular lawyer below Orleans. Who, then, will complain of a few regular man-eating sharks along the Back Side?

One of the ministers of Truro, when I asked what the fishermen did in the winter, answered that they did nothing but go a-visiting, sit about, and tell stories, though they worked hard in summer. Yet it is not a long vacation they get. I am sorry that I have not been there in winter to hear their yarns. Almost every Cape man is captain of some craft or other, — every man at least who is at the head of his own affairs, though it is not every one that is, for some heads have the force of alpha privative, negativing all the efforts which Nature would fain make through them. The greater number of men are merely corporals. It is worth the while to talk with one whom his neighbors address as Captain, though his craft may have long been sunk, and he may be holding by his teeth to the shattered mast of a pipe alone, and only gets half-seas-over in a figurative sense, now. He is pretty sure to vindicate his right to the title at last, — can tell one or two good stories at least.

For the most part we saw only the back side of the towns, but our story is true as far as it goes. We

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might have made more of the Bay Side, but we were inclined to open our eyes widest at the Atlantic. We did not care to see those features of the Cape in which it is inferior or merely equal to the mainland, but only those in which it is peculiar or superior. We cannot say how its towns look in front to one who goes to meet them; we went to see the ocean behind them. They were merely the raft on which we stood, and we took notice of the barnacles which adhered to it, and some carvings upon it.

Before we left the wharf we made the acquaintance of a passenger whom we had seen at the hotel. When we asked him which way he came to Provincetown, he answered that he was cast ashore at Wood End, Saturday night, in the same storm in which the St. John was wrecked. He had been at work as a carpenter in Maine, and took passage for Boston in a schooner laden with lumber. When the storm came on, they endeavored to get into Provincetown harbor. "It was dark and misty," said he, "and as we were steering for Long Point Light we suddenly saw the land near us, — for our compass was out of order, — varied several degrees [a mariner always casts the blame on his compass], — but there being a mist on shore, we thought it was farther off than it was, and so held on, and we immediately struck on the bar. Says the Captain, 'We are lost.' Says I to the Captain, 'Now don't let her strike again this way; head her right on.' The Captain thought a moment, and then headed her on. The sea washed completely over us, and well-nigh took the breath out of my body. I

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held on to the running rigging, but I have learned to hold on to the standing rigging the next time." "Well, were there any drowned?" I asked. "No; we all got safe to a house at Wood End, at midnight, wet to our skins, and half frozen to death." He had apparently spent the time since playing checkers at the hotel, and was congratulating himself on having beaten a tall fellow-boarder at that game. "The vessel is to be sold at auction to-day," he added. (We had heard the sound of the crier's bell which advertised it.) "The Captain is rather down about it, but I tell him to cheer up and he will soon get another vessel."

At that moment the Captain called to him from the wharf. He looked like a man just from the country, with a cap made of a woodchuck's skin, and now that I had heard a part of his history, he appeared singularly destitute, — a captain without any vessel, only a greatcoat! and that perhaps a borrowed one! Not even a dog followed him; only his title stuck to him. I also saw one of the crew. They all had caps of the same pattern, and wore a subdued look, in addition to their naturally aquiline features, as if a breaker — a "comber" — had washed over them. As we passed Wood End, we noticed the pile of lumber on the shore which had made the cargo of their vessel.

About Long Point in the summer you commonly see them catching lobsters for the New York market, from small boats just off the shore, or rather, the lobsters catch themselves, for they cling to the netting on which the bait is placed, of their own accord, and thus are drawn up. They sell them fresh for two cents apiece.

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Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. The mackerel fleet had been getting to sea, one after another, ever since midnight, and as we were leaving the Cape we passed near to many of them under sail, and got a nearer view than we had had; — half a dozen red-shirted men and boys, leaning over the rail to look at us, the skipper shouting back the number of barrels he had caught, in answer to our inquiry. All sailors pause to watch a steamer, and shout in welcome or derision. In one a large Newfoundland dog put his paws on the rail and stood up as high as any of them, and looked as wise. But the skipper, who did not wish to be seen no better employed than a dog, rapped him on the nose and sent him below. Such is human justice! I thought I could hear him making an effective appeal down there from human to divine justice. He must have had much the cleanest breast of the two.

Still, many a mile behind us across the Bay, we saw the white sails of the mackerel-fishers hovering round Cape Cod, and when they were all hull down, and the low extremity of the Cape was also down, their white sails still appeared on both sides of it, around where it had sunk like a city on the ocean, proclaiming the rare qualities of Cape Cod Harbor. But before the extremity of the Cape had completely sunk, it appeared like a filmy sliver of land lying flat on the ocean, and later still a mere reflection of a sand-bar on the haze above. Its name suggests a homely truth, but it would be more poetic if it described the impression which it makes on the beholder. Some capes have peculiarly suggestive

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names. There is Cape Wrath, the northwest point of Scotland, for instance; what a good name for a cape lying far away, dark over the water, under a lowering sky!

Mild as it was on shore this morning, the wind was cold and piercing on the water. Though it be the hottest day in July on land, and the voyage is to last but four hours, take your thickest clothes with you, for you are about to float over melted icebergs. When I left Boston in the steamboat on the 25th of June the next year, it was a quite warm day on shore. The passengers were dressed in their thinnest clothes, and at first sat under their umbrellas, but when we were fairly out on the Bay, such as had only thin coats were suffering with the cold, and sought the shelter of the pilot's house and the warmth of the chimney. But when we approached the harbor of Provincetown, I was surprised to perceive what an influence that low and narrow strip of sand, only a mile or two in width, had over the temperature of the air for many miles around. We penetrated into a sultry atmosphere where our thin coats were once more in fashion, and found the inhabitants sweltering.

Leaving far on one side Manomet Point in Plymouth and the Scituate shore, after being out of sight of land for an hour or two, for it was rather hazy, we neared the Cohasset Rocks again at Minot's Ledge, and saw the great tupelo tree on the edge of Scituate, which lifts its dome, like an umbelliferous plant, high over the surrounding forest, and is conspicuous for many miles over land and water. Here was the new iron lighthouse,

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then unfinished, in the shape of an egg-shell painted red, and placed high on iron pillars, like the ovum of a sea-monster floating on the waves, — destined to be phosphorescent. As we passed it at half-tide we saw the spray tossed up nearly to the shell. A man was to live in that egg-shell day and night, a mile from the shore. When I passed it the next summer it was finished and two men lived in it, and a lighthouse-keeper said that they told him that in a recent gale it had rocked so as to shake the plates off the table. Think of making your bed thus in the crest of a breaker! To have the waves, like a pack of hungry wolves, eying you always, night and day, and from time to time making a spring at you, almost sure to have you at last. And not one of all those voyagers can come to your relief, — but when yon light goes out, it will be a sign that the light of your life has gone out also. What a place to compose a work on breakers! This lighthouse was the cynosure of all eyes. Every passenger watched it for half an hour at least; yet a colored cook belonging to the boat, whom I had seen come out of his quarters several times to empty his dishes over the side with a flourish, chancing to come out just as we were abreast of this light, and not more than forty rods from it, and were all gazing at it, as he drew back his arm, caught sight of it, and with surprise exclaimed, "What's that?" He had been employed on this boat for a year, and passed this light every week-day, but as he had never chanced to empty his dishes just at that point, had never seen it before. To look at lights was the pilot's business; he minded the kitchen fire. It sug-

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gested how little some who voyaged round the world could manage to see. You would almost as easily believe that there are men who never yet chanced to come out at the right time to see the sun. What avails it though a light be placed on the top of a hill, if you spend all your life directly under the hill? It might as well be under a bushel. This lighthouse, as is well known, was swept away in a storm in April, 1851, and the two men in it, and the next morning not a vestige of it was to be seen from the shore.

A Hull man told me that he helped set up a white oak pole on Minot's Ledge some years before. It was fifteen inches in diameter, forty-one feet high, sunk four feet in the rock, and was secured by four guys, — but it stood only one year. Stone piled up cob-fashion near the same place stood eight years.

When I crossed the Bay in the Melrose in July, we hugged the Scituate shore as long as possible, in order to take advantage of the wind. Far out on the Bay (off this shore) we scared up a brood of young ducks, probably black ones, bred hereabouts, which the packet had frequently disturbed in her trips. A townsman, who was making the voyage for the first time, walked slowly round into the rear of the helmsman, when we were in the middle of the Bay, and looking out over the sea, before he sat down there, remarked with as much originality as was possible for one who used a borrowed expression, "This is a great country." He had been a timber merchant, and I afterward saw him taking the diameter of the mainmast with his stick, and estimating its height. I returned from the same

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excursion in the Olata, a very handsome and swift-sailing yacht, which left Provincetown at the same time with two other packets, the Melrose and Frolic. At first there was scarcely a breath of air stirring, and we loitered about Long Point for an hour in company, — with our heads over the rail watching the great sand-circles and the fishes at the bottom in calm water fifteen feet deep. But after clearing the Cape we rigged a flying-jib, and, as the Captain had prophesied, soon showed our consorts our heels. There was a steamer six or eight miles northward, near the Cape, towing a large ship toward Boston. Its smoke stretched perfectly horizontal several miles over the sea, and by a sudden change in its direction, warned us of a change in the wind before we felt it. The steamer appeared very far from the ship, and some young men who had frequently used the Captain's glass, but did not suspect that the vessels were connected, expressed surprise that they kept about the same distance apart for so many hours. At which the Captain dryly remarked, that probably they would never get any nearer together. As long as the wind held we kept pace with the steamer, but at length it died away almost entirely, and the flying-jib did all the work. When we passed the light-boat at Minot's Ledge, the Melrose and Frolic were just visible ten miles astern.

Consider the islands bearing the names of all the saints, bristling with forts like chestnut-burs, or *Echinidæ*, yet the police will not let a couple of Irishmen have a private sparring-match on one of them, as it is a government monopoly; all the great seaports are in

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a boxing attitude, and you must sail prudently between two tiers of stony knuckles before you come to feel the warmth of their breasts.

The Bermudas are said to have been discovered by a Spanish ship of that name which was wrecked on them, "which till then," says Captain John Smith, "for six thousand years had been nameless." The English did not stumble upon them in their first voyages to Virginia; and the first Englishman who was ever there was wrecked on them in 1593. Smith says, "No place known hath better walls nor a broader ditch." Yet at the very first planting of them with some sixty persons, in 1612, the first governor, the same year, "built and laid the foundation of eight or nine forts." To be ready, one would say, to entertain the first ship's company that should be *next* shipwrecked on to them. It would have been more sensible to have built as many "charity-houses." These are the vexed Bermoothes.

Our great sails caught all the air there was, and our low and narrow hull caused the least possible friction. Coming up the harbor against the stream we swept by everything. Some young men returning from a fishing excursion came to the side of their smack, while we were thus steadily drawing by them, and, bowing, observed, with the best possible grace, "We give it up." Yet sometimes we were nearly at a standstill. The sailors watched (two) objects on the shore to ascertain whether we advanced or receded. In the harbor it was like the evening of a holiday. The Eastern steamboat passed us with music and a cheer, as if they were going to a ball, when they might be going to — Davy's locker.

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I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's mate to some girls as we passed that spot. That was the name of a sailor hung there, he said. — "If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent, it will be washed away," and now it is all washed away!

Next (?) came the fort on George's Island. These are bungling contrivances: not our *fortes*, but our *foibles*. Wolfe sailed by the strongest fort in North America in the dark, and took it.

I admired the skill with which the vessel was at last brought to her place in the dock, near the end of Long Wharf. It was candle-light, and my eyes could not distinguish the wharves jutting out toward us, but it appeared like an even line of shore densely crowded with shipping. You could not have guessed within a quarter of a mile of Long Wharf. Nevertheless, we were to be blown to a crevice amid them, — steering right into the maze. Down goes the mainsail, and only the jib draws us along. Now we are within four rods of the shipping, having already dodged several outsiders; but it is still only a maze of spars, and rigging, and hulls, — not a crack can be seen. Down goes the jib, but still we advance. The Captain stands aft with one hand on the tiller, and the other holding his night-glass, — his son stands on the bowsprit straining his eyes, — the passengers feel their hearts half-way to their mouths, expecting a crash. "Do you see any room there?" asks the Captain quietly. He must make up his mind in five seconds, else he will carry away that vessel's bowsprit, or lose his own. "Yes, sir, here is a place for us;" and in three minutes more we are

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fast to the wharf in a little gap between two bigger vessels.

And now we were in Boston. Whoever has been down to the end of Long Wharf, and walked through Quincy Market, has seen Boston.

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, and the rest, are the names of wharves projecting into the sea (surrounded by the shops and dwellings of the merchants), good places to take in and to discharge a cargo (to land the products of other climes and load the exports of our own). I see a great many barrels and fig-drums, — piles of wood for umbrella-sticks, — blocks of granite and ice, — great heaps of goods, and the means of packing and conveying them, — much wrapping-paper and twine, — many crates and hogsheads and trucks, — and that is Boston. The more barrels, the more Boston. The museums and scientific societies and libraries are accidental. They gather around the sands to save carting. The wharf rats, and custom-house officers, and broken-down poets, seeking a fortune amid the barrels; their better or worse lyceums, and preachings, and doctorings; these, too, are accidental, and the malls of commons are always small potatoes. When I go to Boston, I naturally go straight through the city (taking the Market in my way), down to the end of Long Wharf, and look off, — for I have no cousins in the back alleys, — and there I see a great many countrymen in their shirt-sleeves from Maine, and Pennsylvania, and all along shore and in shore, and some foreigners beside, loading and unloading and steering their teams about, as at a country fair.

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When we reached Boston that October, I had a gill of Provincetown sand in my shoes, and at Concord there was still enough left to sand my pages for many a day; and I seemed to hear the sea roar, as if I lived in a shell, for a week afterward.

The places which I have described may seem strange and remote to my townsmen, — indeed, from Boston to Provincetown is twice as far as from England to France; yet step into the cars, and in six hours you may stand on those four planks, and see the Cape which Gosnold is said to have discovered, and which I have so poorly described. If you had started when I first advised you, you might have seen our tracks in the sand, still fresh, and reaching all the way from the Nauset lights to Race Point, some thirty miles, — for at every step we made an impression on the Cape, though we were not aware of it, and though our account may have made no impression on your minds. But what is our account? In it there is no roar, no beach-birds, no tow-cloth.

We often love to think now of the life of men on beaches, — at least in midsummer, when the weather is serene; their sunny lives on the sand, amid the beach-grass and the bayberries, their companion a cow, their wealth a jag of driftwood or a few beach plums, and their music the surf and the peep of the beach-bird.

We went to see the ocean, and that is probably the best place of all our coast to go to. If you go by water, you may experience what it is to leave and to approach these shores; you may see the stormy petrel by the way, *θαλασσοδρόμα*, running over the sea, and if the

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weather is but a little thick, may lose sight of the land in mid-passage. I do not know where there is another beach in the Atlantic States, attached to the mainland, so long, and at the same time so straight, and completely uninterrupted by creeks or coves or fresh-water rivers or marshes; for though there may be clear places on the map, they would probably be found by the foot traveler to be intersected by creeks and marshes; certainly there is none where there is a double way, such as I have described, a beach and a bank, which at the same time shows you the land and the sea, and part of the time two seas. The Great South Beach of Long Island, which I have since visited, is longer still without an inlet, but it is literally a mere sand-bar, exposed, several miles from the island, and not the edge of a continent wasting before the assaults of the ocean. Though wild and desolate, as it wants the bold bank, it possesses but half the grandeur of Cape Cod in my eyes, nor is the imagination contented with its southern aspect. The only other beaches of great length on our Atlantic coast, which I have heard sailors speak of, are those of Barnegat on the Jersey shore, and Currituck between Virginia and North Carolina; but these, like the last, are low and narrow sand-bars, lying off the coast, and separated from the mainland by lagoons. Besides, as you go farther south the tides are feebler, and cease to add variety and grandeur to the shore. On the Pacific side of our country also, no doubt, there is good walking to be found; a recent writer and dweller there tells us that "the coast from Cape Disappointment (or the Columbia River) to Cape Flattery

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(at the Strait of Juan de Fuca) is nearly north and south, and can be traveled almost its entire length on a beautiful sand-beach," with the exception of two bays, four or five rivers, and a few points jutting into the sea. The common shell-fish found there seem to be often of corresponding types, if not identical species, with those of Cape Cod. The beach which I have described, however, is not hard enough for carriages, but must be explored on foot. When one carriage has passed along, a following one sinks deeper still in its rut. It has at present no name any more than fame. That portion south of Nauset Harbor is commonly called Chatham Beach. The part in Eastham is called Nauset Beach, and off Wellfleet and Truro the Back Side, or sometimes, perhaps, Cape Cod Beach. I think that part which extends without interruption from Nauset Harbor to Race Point should be called Cape Cod Beach, and do so speak of it.

One of the most attractive points for visitors is in the northeast part of Wellfleet, where accommodations (I mean for men and women of tolerable health and habits) could probably be had within half a mile of the seashore. It best combines the country and the seaside. Though the ocean is out of sight, its faintest murmur is audible, and you have only to climb a hill to find yourself on its brink. It is but a step from the glassy surface of the Herring Ponds to the big Atlantic Pond where the waves never cease to break. Or perhaps the Highland Light in Truro may compete with this locality, for there there is a more uninterrupted view of the ocean and the Bay, and in the summer there is always some air stirring on

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the edge of the bank there, so that the inhabitants know not what hot weather is. As for the view, the keeper of the light, with one or more of his family, walks out to the edge of the bank after every meal to look off, just as if they had not lived there all their days. In short, it will wear well. And what picture will you substitute for that, upon your walls? But ladies cannot get down the bank there at present without the aid of a block and tackle.

Most persons visit the seaside in warm weather, when fogs are frequent, and the atmosphere is wont to be thick, and the charm of the sea is to some extent lost. But I suspect that the fall is the best season, for then the atmosphere is more transparent, and it is a greater pleasure to look out over the sea. The clear and bracing air, and the storms of autumn and winter even, are necessary in order that we may get the impression which the sea is calculated to make. In October, when the weather is not intolerably cold, and the landscape wears its autumnal tints, such as, methinks, only a Cape Cod landscape ever wears, especially if you have a storm during your stay, — that I am convinced is the best time to visit this shore. In autumn, even in August, the thoughtful days begin, and we can walk anywhere with profit. Beside, an outward cold and dreariness, which make it necessary to seek shelter at night, lend a spirit of adventure to a walk.

The time must come when this coast will be a place of resort for those New-Englanders who really wish to visit the seaside. At present it is wholly unknown to the fashionable world, and probably it will never be

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agreeable to them. If it is merely a ten-pin alley, or a circular railway, or an ocean of mint-julep, that the visitor is in search of, — if he thinks more of the wine than the brine, as I suspect some do at Newport, — I trust that for a long time he will be disappointed here. But this shore will never be more attractive than it is now. Such beaches as are fashionable are here made and unmade in a day, I may almost say, by the sea shifting its sands. Lynn and Nantasket! this bare and bended arm it is that makes the bay in which they lie so snugly. What are springs and waterfalls? Here is the spring of springs, the waterfall of waterfalls. A storm in the fall or winter is the time to visit it; a lighthouse or a fisherman's hut, the true hotel. A man may stand there and put all America behind him.

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MISCELLANIES

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THE SERVICE:
QUALITIES OF THE RECRUIT

THE brave man is the elder son of creation who has stepped buoyantly into his inheritance, while the coward, who is the younger, waiteth patiently for his decease. He rides as wide of this earth's gravity as a star, and by yielding incessantly to all impulses of the soul is drawn upward and becomes a fixed star. His bravery consists not so much in resolute action as healthy and assured rest. Its palmy state is a staying at home, compelling alliance in all directions. So stands his life to heaven as some fair sunlit tree against the western horizon, and by sunrise is planted on some eastern hill to glisten in the first rays of the dawn. The brave man braves nothing, nor knows he of his bravery. . . . He does not present the gleaming edge to ward off harm, for that will oftenest attract the lightning, but rather is the all-pervading ether, which the lightning does not strike, but purifies. It is the profanity of his companion, as a flash across the face of his sky, which lights up and reveals its serene depth.

A pyramid some artisan may measure with his line, but if he give you the dimensions of the Parthenon in feet and inches, the figures will not embrace it like a cord, but dangle from its entablature like an elastic drapery.

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The golden mean in ethics, as in physics, is the centre of the system and that about which all revolve, and though to a distant and plodding planet it be an uttermost extreme, yet one day, when that planet's year is completed, it will be found to be central.

The coward wants resolution, which the brave man can do without. He recognizes no faith above a creed, thinking this straw by which he is moored does him good service, because his sheet anchor does not drag.

The divinity in man is the true vestal fire of the temple which is never permitted to go out, but burns as steadily and with as pure a flame on the obscure provincial altar as in Numa's temple at Rome. In the meanest are all the materials of manhood, only they are not rightly disposed.

We say justly that the weak person is flat, for, like all flat substances, he does not stand in the direction of his strength, that is, on his edge, but affords a convenient surface to put upon. He slides all the way through life. Most things are strong in one direction, a straw longitudinally, a board in the direction of its edge, but the brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on its flat side and is equally strong every way. The coward is wretchedly spheroidal at best, too much educated or drawn out on one side and depressed on the other, or may be likened to a hollow sphere, whose disposition of matter is least where the greatest bulk is intended. We shall not attain to be spherical by lying on one or the other side for an eternity, but only by resigning ourselves implicitly to the law of gravity in us shall we find our axis coincident with the celestial axis, and by re-

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volving incessantly through all circles acquire a perfect sphericity.

It is not enough that our life is an easy one. We must live on the stretch, retiring to our rest like soldiers on the eve of a battle, looking forward with ardor to the strenuous sortie of the morrow.

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PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED [1]

We learn that Mr. Etzler is a native of Germany, and originally published his book in Pennsylvania, ten or twelve years ago; and now a second English edition, from the original American one, is demanded by his readers across the water, owing, we suppose, to the recent spread of Fourier's doctrines. It is one of the signs of the times. We confess that we have risen from reading this book with enlarged ideas, and grander conceptions of our duties in this world. It did expand us a little. It is worth attending to, if only that it entertains large questions. Consider what Mr. Etzler proposes: —

"Fellow-men! I promise to show the means of creating a paradise within ten years, where everything desirable for human life may be had by every man in superabundance, without labor, and without pay; where the whole face of nature shall be changed into the most beautiful forms, and man may live in the most magnificent palaces, in all imaginable refinements of luxury, and in the most delightful gardens; where he may accomplish, without labor, in one year, more than hitherto could be done in thousands of years; may level mountains, sink valleys, create lakes, drain lakes and swamps, and intersect the land everywhere with beau-

[1] *The Paradise within the Reach of all Men, without Labor, by Powers of Nature and Machinery. An Address to all intelligent Men.* In Two Parts. By J. A. Etzler. Part First. Second English Edition. London. 1842. Pp. 55.

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tiful canals, and roads for transporting heavy loads of many thousand tons, and for traveling one thousand miles in twenty-four hours; may cover the ocean with floating islands movable in any desired direction with immense power and celerity, in perfect security, and with all comforts and luxuries, bearing gardens and palaces, with thousands of families, and provided with rivulets of sweet water; may explore the interior of the globe, and travel from pole to pole in a fortnight; provide himself with means, unheard of yet, for increasing his knowledge of the world, and so his intelligence; lead a life of continual happiness, of enjoyments yet unknown; free himself from almost all the evils that afflict mankind, except death, and even put death far beyond the common period of human life, and finally render it less afflicting. Mankind may thus live in and enjoy a new world, far superior to the present, and raise themselves far higher in the scale of being."

It would seem from this and various indications beside, that there is a transcendentalism in mechanics as well as in ethics. While the whole field of the one reformer lies beyond the boundaries of space, the other is pushing his schemes for the elevation of the race to its utmost limits. While one scours the heavens, the other sweeps the earth. One says he will reform himself, and then nature and circumstances will be right. Let us not obstruct ourselves, for that is the greatest friction. It is of little importance though a cloud obstruct the view of the astronomer compared with his own blindness. The other will reform nature and circumstances, and then man will be right. Talk no more

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vaguely, says he, of reforming the world, — I will reform the globe itself. What matters it whether I remove this humor out of my flesh, or this pestilent humor from the fleshy part of the globe? Nay, is not the latter the more generous course? At present the globe goes with a shattered constitution in its orbit. Has it not asthma, and ague, and fever, and dropsy, and flatulence, and pleurisy, and is it not afflicted with vermin? Has it not its healthful laws counteracted, and its vital energy which will yet redeem it? No doubt the simple powers of nature, properly directed by man, would make it healthy and a paradise; as the laws of man's own constitution but wait to be obeyed, to restore him to health and happiness. Our panaceas cure but few ails, our general hospitals are private and exclusive. We must set up another Hygeia than is now worshiped. Do not the quacks even direct small doses for children, larger for adults, and larger still for oxen and horses? Let us remember that we are to prescribe for the globe itself.

This fair homestead has fallen to us, and how little have we done to improve it, how little have we cleared and hedged and ditched! We are too inclined to go hence to a "better land," without lifting a finger, as our farmers are moving to the Ohio soil; but would it not be more heroic and faithful to till and redeem this New England soil of the world? The still youthful energies of the globe have only to be directed in their proper channel. Every gazette brings accounts of the untutored freaks of the wind, — shipwrecks and hurricanes which the mariner and planter accept as special or gen-

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eral providences; but they touch our consciences, they remind us of our sins. Another deluge would disgrace mankind. We confess we never had much respect for that antediluvian race. A thoroughbred business man cannot enter heartily upon the business of life without first looking into his accounts. How many things are now at loose ends! Who knows which way the wind will blow to-morrow? Let us not succumb to nature. We will marshal the clouds and restrain tempests; we will bottle up pestilent exhalations; we will probe for earthquakes, grub them up, and give vent to the dangerous gas; we will disembowel the volcano, and extract its poison, take its seed out. We will wash water, and warm fire, and cool ice, and underprop the earth. We will teach birds to fly, and fishes to swim, and ruminants to chew the cud. It is time we had looked into these things.

And it becomes the moralist, too, to inquire what man might do to improve and beautify the system; what to make the stars shine more brightly, the sun more cheery and joyous, the moon more placid and content. Could he not heighten the tints of flowers and the melody of birds? Does he perform his duty to the inferior races? Should he not be a god to them? What is the part of magnanimity to the whale and the beaver? Should we not fear to exchange places with them for a day, lest by their behavior they should shame us? Might we not treat with magnanimity the shark and the tiger, not descend to meet them on their own level, with spears of shark's teeth and bucklers of tiger's skin? We slander the hyena; man is the fiercest

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and cruelest animal. Ah! he is of little faith; even the erring comets and meteors would thank him, and return his kindness in their kind.

How meanly and grossly do we deal with nature! Could we not have a less gross labor? What else do these fine inventions suggest, — magnetism, the daguerreotype, electricity? Can we not do more than cut and trim the forest? — can we not assist in its interior economy, in the circulation of the sap? Now we work superficially and violently. We do not suspect how much might be done to improve our relation to animated nature even; what kindness and refined courtesy there might be.

There are certain pursuits which, if not wholly poetic and true, do at least suggest a nobler and finer relation to nature than we know. The keeping of bees, for instance, is a very slight interference. It is like directing the sunbeams. All nations, from the remotest antiquity, have thus fingered nature. There are Hymettus and Hybla, and how many bee-renowned spots beside! There is nothing gross in the idea of these little herds, —their hum like the faintest low of kine in the meads. A pleasant reviewer has lately reminded us that in some places they are led out to pasture where the flowers are most abundant. "Columella tells us," says he, "that the inhabitants of Arabia sent their hives into Attica to benefit by the later-blowing flowers." Annually are the hives, in immense pyramids, carried up the Nile in boats, and suffered to float slowly down the stream by night, resting by day, as the flowers put forth along the banks; and they determine the richness of any

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locality, and so the profitableness of delay, by the sinking of the boat in the water. We are told, by the same reviewer, of a man in Germany, whose bees yielded more honey than those of his neighbors, with no apparent advantage; but at length he informed them, that he had turned his hives one degree more to the east, and so his bees, having two hours the start in the morning, got the first sip of honey. True, there is treachery and selfishness behind all this, but these things suggest to the poetic mind what might be done.

Many examples there are of a grosser interference, yet not without their apology. We saw last summer, on the side of a mountain, a dog employed to churn for a farmer's family, traveling upon a horizontal wheel, and though he had sore eyes, an alarming cough, and withal a demure aspect, yet their bread did get buttered for all that. Undoubtedly, in the most brilliant successes, the first rank is always sacrificed. Much useless traveling of horses, *in extenso*, has of late years been improved for man's behoof, only two forces being taken advantage of,—the gravity of the horse, which is the centripetal, and his centrifugal inclination to go ahead. Only these two elements in the calculation. And is not the creature's whole economy better economized thus? Are not all finite beings better pleased with motions relative than absolute? And what is the great globe itself but such a wheel,—a larger treadmill,—so that our horse's freest steps over prairies are oftentimes balked and rendered of no avail by the earth's motion on its axis? But here he is the central agent and motive-power; and, for variety of scenery,

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being provided with a window in front, do not the ever-varying activity and fluctuating energy of the creature himself work the effect of the most varied scenery on a country road? It must be confessed that horses at present work too exclusively for men, rarely men for horses; and the brute degenerates in man's society.

It will be seen that we contemplate a time when man's will shall be law to the physical world, and he shall no longer be deterred by such abstractions as time and space, height and depth, weight and hardness, but shall indeed be the lord of creation. "Well," says the faithless reader, "'life is short, but art is long;' where is the power that will effect all these changes?" This it is the very object of Mr. Etzler's volume to show. At present, he would merely remind us that there are innumerable and immeasurable powers already existing in nature, unimproved on a large scale, or for generous and universal ends, amply sufficient for these purposes. He would only indicate their existence, as a surveyor makes known the existence of a water-power on any stream; but for their application he refers us to a sequel to this book, called the "Mechanical System." A few of the most obvious and familiar of these powers are the Wind, the Tide, the Waves, the Sunshine. Let us consider their value.

First, there is the power of the Wind, constantly exerted over the globe. It appears from observation of a sailing-vessel, and from scientific tables, that the average power of the wind is equal to that of one horse for every one hundred square feet. We do not attach much value

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to this statement of the comparative power of the wind and horse, for no common ground is mentioned on which they can be compared. Undoubtedly, each is incomparably excellent in its way, and every general comparison made for such practical purposes as are contemplated, which gives a preference to the one, must be made with some unfairness to the other. The scientific tables are, for the most part, true only in a tabular sense. We suspect that a loaded wagon, with a light sail, ten feet square, would not have been blown so far by the end of the year, under equal circumstances, as a common racer or dray horse would have drawn it. And how many crazy structures on our globe's surface, of the same dimensions, would wait for dry-rot if the traces of one horse were hitched to them, even to their windward side? Plainly this is not the principle of comparison. But even the steady and constant force of the horse may be rated as equal to his weight at least. Yet we should prefer to let the zephyrs and gales bear, with all their weight, upon our fences, than that Dobbin, with feet braced, should lean ominously against them for a season.

Nevertheless, here is an almost incalculable power at our disposal, yet how trifling the use we make of it! It only serves to turn a few mills, blow a few vessels across the ocean, and a few trivial ends besides. What a poor compliment do we pay to our indefatigable and energetic servant!

Men having discovered the power of falling water, which, after all, is comparatively slight, how eagerly do they seek out and improve these *privileges!* Let a dif-

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ference of but a few feet in level be discovered on some stream near a populous town, some slight occasion for gravity to act, and the whole economy of the neighborhood is changed at once. Men do indeed speculate about and with this power as if it were the only privilege. But meanwhile this aerial stream is falling from far greater heights with more constant flow, never shrunk by drought, offering mill-sites wherever the wind blows; a Niagara in the air, with no Canada side; — only the application is hard.

There are the powers, too, of the Tide and Waves, constantly ebbing and flowing, lapsing and relapsing, but they serve man in but few ways. They turn a few tide-mills, and perform a few other insignificant and accidental services only. We all perceive the effect of the tide; how imperceptibly it creeps up into our harbors and rivers, and raises the heaviest navies as easily as the lightest chip. Everything that floats must yield to it. But man, slow to take nature's constant hint of assistance, makes slight and irregular use of this power, in careening ships and getting them afloat when aground.

This power may be applied in various ways. A large body, of the heaviest materials that will float, may first be raised by it, and being attached to the end of a balance reaching from the land, or from a stationary support fastened to the bottom, when the tide falls the whole weight will be brought to bear upon the end of the balance. Also, when the tide rises, it may be made to exert a nearly equal force in the opposite direction. It can be employed wherever a *point d'appui* can be obtained.

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Verily, the land would wear a busy aspect at the spring and neap tide, and these island ships, these *terrae infirmae*, which realize the fables of antiquity, affect our imagination. We have often thought that the fittest locality for a human dwelling was on the edge of the land, that there the constant lesson and impression of the sea might sink deep into the life and character of the landsman, and perhaps impart a marine tint to his imagination. It is a noble word, that *mariner*, — one who is conversant with the sea. There should be more of what it signifies in each of us. It is a worthy country to belong to, — we look to see him not disgrace it. Perhaps we should be equally mariners and terreners, and even our Green Mountains need some of that sea-green to be mixed with them.

The computation of the power of the Waves is less satisfactory. While only the average power of the wind and the average height of the tide were taken before, now the extreme height of the waves is used, for they are made to rise ten feet above the level of the sea, to which, adding ten more for depression, we have twenty feet, or the extreme height of a wave. Indeed, the power of the waves, which is produced by the wind blowing obliquely and at disadvantage upon the water, is made to be, not only three thousand times greater than that of the tide, but one hundred times greater than that of the wind itself, meeting its object at right angles. Moreover, this power is measured by the area of the vessel, and not by its length mainly, and it seems to be forgotten that the motion of the waves is chiefly undulatory, and exerts a power only within the limits

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of a vibration, else the very continents, with their extensive coasts, would soon be set adrift.

Finally, there is the power to be derived from Sunshine, by the principle on which Archimedes contrived his burning-mirrors, a multiplication of mirrors reflecting the rays of the sun upon the same spot, till the requisite degree of heat is obtained. The principal application of this power will be to the boiling of water and production of steam. So much for these few and more obvious powers, already used to a trifling extent. But there are innumerable others in nature, not described nor discovered. These, however, will do for the present. This would be to make the sun and the moon equally our satellites. For, as the moon is the cause of the tides, and the sun the cause of the wind, which, in turn, is the cause of the waves, all the work of this planet would be performed by these far influences.

"We may store up water in some eminent pond, and take out of this store, at any time, as much water through the outlet as we want to employ, by which means the original power may react for many days after it has ceased. . . . Such reservoirs of moderate elevation or size need not be made artificially, but will be found made by nature very frequently, requiring but little aid for their completion. They require no regularity of form. Any valley, with lower grounds in its vicinity, would answer the purpose. Small crevices may be filled up. Such places may be eligible for the beginning of enterprises of this kind."

The greater the height, of course, the less water required. But suppose a level and dry country; then

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hill and valley, and "eminent pond," are to be constructed by main force; or, if the springs are unusually low, then dirt and stones may be used, and the disadvantage arising from friction will be counterbalanced by their greater gravity. Nor shall a single rood of dry land be sunk in such artificial ponds as may be wanted, but their surfaces "may be covered with rafts decked with fertile earth, and all kinds of vegetables which may grow there as well as anywhere else."

And, finally, by the use of thick envelopes retaining the heat, and other contrivances, "the power of steam caused by sunshine may react at will, and thus be rendered perpetual, no matter how often or how long the sunshine may be interrupted."

Here is power enough, one would think, to accomplish somewhat. These are the Powers below. O ye millwrights, ye engineers, ye operatives and speculators of every class, never again complain of a want of power: it is the grossest form of infidelity. The question is, not how we shall execute, but what. Let us not use in a niggardly manner what is thus generously offered.

Consider what revolutions are to be effected in agriculture. First, in the new country a machine is to move along, taking out trees and stones to any required depth, and piling them up in convenient heaps; then the same machine, "with a little alteration," is to plane the ground perfectly, till there shall be no hills nor valleys, making the requisite canals, ditches, and roads as it goes along. The same machine, "with some other little alterations," is then to sift the ground thoroughly, supply fertile soil from other places if wanted, and plant

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it; and finally the same machine, "with a little addition," is to reap and gather in the crop, thresh and grind it, or press it to oil, or prepare it any way for final use. For the description of these machines we are referred to "Etzler's Mechanical System," pages 11 to 27. We should be pleased to see that "Mechanical System." We have great faith in it. But we cannot stop for applications now.

Who knows but by accumulating the power until the end of the present century, using meanwhile only the smallest allowance, reserving all that blows, all that shines, all that ebbs and flows, all that dashes, we may have got such a reserved accumulated power as to run the earth off its track into a new orbit, some summer, and so change the tedious vicissitude of the seasons? Or, perchance, coming generations will not abide the dissolution of the globe, but, availing themselves of future inventions in aerial locomotion, and the navigation of space, the entire race may migrate from the earth, to settle some vacant and more western planet, it may be still healthy, perchance unearthy, not composed of dirt and stones, whose primary strata only are strewn, and where no weeds are sown. It took but little art, a simple application of natural laws, a canoe, a paddle, and a sail of matting, to people the isles of the Pacific, and a little more will people the shining isles of space. Do we not see in the firmament the lights carried along the shore by night, as Columbus did? Let us not despair nor mutiny.

"The dwellings also ought to be very different from what is known, if the full benefit of our means is to

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be enjoyed. They are to be of a structure for which we have no name yet. They are to be neither palaces, nor temples, nor cities, but a combination of all, superior to whatever is known.

"Earth may be baked into bricks, or even vitrified stone by heat, — we may bake large masses of any size and form, into stone and vitrified substance of the greatest durability, lasting even thousands of years, out of clayey earth, or of stones ground to dust, by the application of burning-mirrors. This is to be done in the open air without other preparation than gathering the substance, grinding and mixing it with water and cement, moulding or casting it, and bringing the focus of the burning-mirrors of proper size upon the same."

The character of the architecture is to be quite different from what it ever has been hitherto; large solid masses are to be baked or cast in one piece, ready shaped in any form that may be desired. The building may, therefore, consist of columns two hundred feet high and upwards, of proportionate thickness, and of one entire piece of vitrified substance; huge pieces are to be moulded so as to join and hook on to each other firmly, by proper joints and folds, and not to yield in any way without breaking.

"Foundries, of any description, are to be heated by burning-mirrors, and will require no labor, except the making of the first moulds and the superintendence for gathering the metal and taking the finished articles away."

Alas! in the present state of science, we must take

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the finished articles away; but think not that man will always be the victim of circumstances.

The countryman who visited the city, and found the streets cluttered with bricks and lumber, reported that it was not yet finished; and one who considers the endless repairs and reforming of our houses might well wonder when they will be done. But why may not the dwellings of men on this earth be built, once for all, of some durable material, some Roman or Etruscan masonry, which will stand, so that time shall only adorn and beautify them? Why may we not finish the outward world for posterity, and leave them leisure to attend to the inner? Surely, all the gross necessities and economies might be cared for in a few years. All might be built and baked and stored up, during this, the term-time of the world, against the vacant eternity, and the globe go provisioned and furnished, like our public vessels, for its voyage through space, as through some Pacific Ocean, while we would "tie up the rudder and sleep before the wind," as those who sail from Lima to Manilla.

But, to go back a few years in imagination, think not that life in these crystal palaces is to bear any analogy to life in our present humble cottages. Far from it. Clothed, once for all, in some "flexible stuff," more durable than George Fox's suit of leather, composed of "fibres of vegetables," "glutinated" together by some "cohesive substances," and made into sheets, like paper, of any size or form, man will put far from him corroding care and the whole host of ills.

"The twenty-five halls in the inside of the square

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are to be each two hundred feet square and high; the forty corridors, each one hundred feet long and twenty wide; the eighty galleries, each from 1,000 to 1,250 feet long; about 7,000 private rooms, the whole surrounded and intersected by the grandest and most splendid colonnades imaginable; floors, ceilings, columns, with their various beautiful and fanciful intervals, all shining, and reflecting to infinity all objects and persons, with splendid lustre of all beautiful colors, and fanciful shapes and pictures.

"All galleries, outside and within the halls, are to be provided with many thousand commodious and most elegant vehicles, in which persons may move up and down like birds, in perfect security, and without exertion. . . . Any member may procure himself all the common articles of his daily wants, by a short turn of some crank, without leaving his apartment.

"One or two persons are sufficient to direct the kitchen business. They have nothing else to do but to superintend the cookery, and to watch the time of the victuals being done, and then to remove them, with the table and vessels, into the dining-hall, or to the respective private apartments, by a slight motion of the hand at some crank. . . . *Any very extraordinary desire of any person may be satisfied by going to the place where the thing is to be had; and anything that requires a particular preparation in cooking or baking may be done by the person who desires it.*"

This is one of those instances in which the individual genius is found to consent, as indeed it always does, at last, with the universal. This last sentence has a cer-

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tain sad and sober truth, which reminds us of the scripture of all nations. All expression of truth does at length take this deep ethical form. Here is hint of a place the most eligible of any in space, and of a servitor, in comparison with whom all other helps dwindle into insignificance. We hope to hear more of him anon, for even a Crystal Palace would be deficient without his invaluable services.

And as for the environs of the establishment:—

"There will be afforded the most enrapturing views to be fancied, out of the private apartments, from the galleries, from the roof, from its turrets and cupolas, — gardens, as far as the eye can see, full of fruits and flowers, arranged in the most beautiful order, with walks, colonnades, aqueducts, canals, ponds, plains, amphitheatres, terraces, fountains, sculptural works, pavilions, gondolas, places for public amusement, etc., to delight the eye and fancy, the taste and smell. . . . The walks and roads are to be paved with hard vitrified large plates, so as to be always clean from all dirt in any weather or season. . . .

"The walks may be covered with porticoes adorned with magnificent columns, statues, and sculptural works; all of vitrified substance, and lasting forever. At night the roof and the inside and outside of the whole square are illuminated by gas-light, which, in the mazes of many-colored crystal-like colonnades and vaultings, is reflected with a brilliancy that gives to the whole a lustre of precious stones, as far as the eye can see. Such are the future abodes of men. . . . Such is the life reserved to true intelligence, but withheld

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from ignorance, prejudice, and stupid adherence to custom."

Thus is Paradise to be Regained, and that old and stern decree at length reversed. Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow. All labor shall be reduced to "a short turn of some crank," and "taking the finished articles away." But there is a crank, — oh, how hard to be turned! Could there not be a crank upon a crank, — an infinitely small crank? — we would fain inquire. No, — alas! not. But there is a certain divine energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet, which may be called the crank within, — the crank after all, — the prime mover in all machinery, — quite indispensable to all work. Would that we might get our hands on its handle! In fact, no work can be shirked. It may be postponed indefinitely, but not infinitely. Nor can any really important work be made easier by coöperation or machinery. Not one particle of labor now threatening any man can be routed without being performed. It cannot be hunted out of the vicinity like jackals and hyenas. It will not run. You may begin by sawing the little sticks, or you may saw the great sticks first, but sooner or later you must saw them both.

We will not be imposed upon by this vast application of forces. We believe that most things will have to be accomplished still by the application called Industry. We are rather pleased, after all, to consider the small private, but both constant and accumulated, force which stands behind every spade in the field. This it is that makes the valleys shine, and the deserts really bloom.

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Sometimes, we confess, we are so degenerate as to reflect with pleasure on the days when men were yoked like cattle, and drew a crooked stick for a plow. After all, the great interests and methods were the same.

It is a rather serious objection to Mr. Etzler's schemes, that they require time, men, and money, three very superfluous and inconvenient things for an honest and well-disposed man to deal with. "The whole world," he tells us, "might therefore be really changed into a paradise, within less than ten years, commencing from the first year of an association for the purpose of constructing and applying the machinery." We are sensible of a startling incongruity when time and money are mentioned in this connection. The ten years which are proposed would be a tedious while to wait, if every man were at his post and did his duty, but quite too short a period, if we are to take time for it. But this fault is by no means peculiar to Mr. Etzler's schemes. There is far too much hurry and bustle, and too little patience and privacy, in all our methods, as if something were to be accomplished in centuries. The true reformer does not want time, nor money, nor coöperation, nor advice. What is time but the stuff delay is made of? And depend upon it, our virtue will not live on the interest of our money. He expects no income, but outgoes; so soon as we begin to count the cost, the cost begins. And as for advice, the information floating in the atmosphere of society is as evanescent and unserviceable to him as gossamer for clubs of Hercules. There is absolutely no common sense; it is common nonsense. If we are to risk a cent or a drop of our

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blood, who then shall advise us? For ourselves, we are too young for experience. Who is old enough? We are older by faith than by experience. In the unbending of the arm to do the deed there is experience worth all the maxims in the world.

"It will now be plainly seen that the execution of the proposals is not proper for individuals. Whether it be proper for government at this time, before the subject has become popular, is a question to be decided; all that is to be done is to step forth, after mature reflection, to confess loudly one's conviction, and to constitute societies. Man is powerful but in union with many. Nothing great, for the improvement of his own condition, or that of his fellow-men, can ever be effected by individual enterprise."

Alas! this is the crying sin of the age, this want of faith in the prevalence of a man. Nothing can be effected but by one man. He who wants help wants everything. True, this is the condition of our weakness, but it can never be the means of our recovery. We must first succeed alone, that we may enjoy our success together. We trust that the social movements which we witness indicate an aspiration not to be thus cheaply satisfied. In this matter of reforming the world, we have little faith in corporations; not thus was it first formed.

But our author is wise enough to say that the raw materials for the accomplishment of his purposes are "iron, copper, wood, earth chiefly, and a union of men whose eyes and understanding are not shut up by preconceptions." Ay, this last may be what we want mainly, — a company of "odd fellows" indeed.

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"Small shares of twenty dollars will be sufficient" — in all, from "200,000 to 300,000" — "to create the first establishment for a whole community of from 3,000 to 4,000 individuals;" at the end of five years we shall have a principal of 200 millions of dollars, and so paradise will be wholly regained at the end of the tenth year. But, alas! the ten years have already elapsed, and there are no signs of Eden yet, for want of the requisite funds to begin the enterprise in a hopeful manner. Yet it seems a safe investment. Perchance they could be hired at a low rate, the property being mortgaged for security, and, if necessary, it could be given up in any stage of the enterprise, without loss, with the fixtures.

But we see two main difficulties in the way: first, the successful application of the powers by machinery (we have not yet seen the "Mechanical System"), and, secondly, which is infinitely harder, the application of man to the work by faith. This it is, we fear, which will prolong the ten years to ten thousand at least. It will take a power more than "80,000 times greater than all the men on earth could effect with their nerves" to persuade men to use that which is already offered them. Even a greater than this physical power must be brought to bear upon that moral power. Faith, indeed, is all the reform that is needed; it is itself a reform. Doubtless, we are as slow to conceive of Paradise as of Heaven, of a perfect natural as of a perfect spiritual world. We see how past ages have loitered and erred. "Is perhaps our generation free from irrationality and error? Have we perhaps reached

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now the summit of human wisdom, and need no more to look out for mental or physical improvement?" Undoubtedly, we are never so visionary as to be prepared for what the next hour may bring forth.

Μέλλει τὸ θεῖον δ' ἔστι τοιοῦτον φύσει.

The Divine is about to be, and such is its nature. In our wisest moments we are secreting a matter, which, like the lime of the shell-fish, incrusts us quite over, and well for us if, like it, we cast our shells from time to time, though they be pearl and of fairest tint. Let us consider under what disadvantages Science has hitherto labored before we pronounce thus confidently on her progress.

Mr. Etzler is not one of the enlightened practical men, the pioneers of the actual, who move with the slow, deliberate tread of science, conserving the world; who execute the dreams of the last century, though they have no dreams of their own; yet he deals in the very raw but still solid material of all inventions. He has more of the practical than usually belongs to so bold a schemer, so resolute a dreamer. Yet his success is in theory, and not in practice, and he feeds our faith rather than contents our understanding. His book wants order, serenity, dignity, everything, — but it does not fail to impart what only man can impart to man of much importance, his own faith. It is true his dreams are not thrilling nor bright enough, and he leaves off to dream where he who dreams just before the dawn begins. His castles in the air fall to the ground, because they are not built lofty enough; they

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should be secured to heaven's roof. After all, the theories and speculations of men concern us more than their puny accomplishment. It is with a certain coldness and languor that we loiter about the actual and so-called practical. How little do the most wonderful inventions of modern times detain us. They insult nature. Every machine, or particular application, seems a slight outrage against universal laws. How many fine inventions are there which do not clutter the ground? We think that those only succeed which minister to our sensible and animal wants, which bake or brew, wash or warm, or the like. But are those of no account which are patented by fancy and imagination, and succeed so admirably in our dreams that they give the tone still to our waking thoughts? Already nature is serving all those uses which science slowly derives on a much higher and grander scale to him that will be served by her. When the sunshine falls on the path of the poet, he enjoys all those pure benefits and pleasures which the arts slowly and partially realize from age to age. The winds which fan his cheek waft him the sum of that profit and happiness which their lagging inventions supply.

The chief fault of this book is, that it aims to secure the greatest degree of gross comfort and pleasure merely. It paints a Mahometan's heaven, and stops short with singular abruptness when we think it is drawing near to the precincts of the Christian's, — and we trust we have not made here a distinction without a difference. Undoubtedly if we were to reform this outward life truly and thoroughly, we should find no

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duty of the inner omitted. It would be employment for our whole nature; and what we should do thereafter would be as vain a question as to ask the bird what it will do when its nest is built and its brood reared. But a moral reform must take place first, and then the necessity of the other will be superseded, and we shall sail and plow by its force alone. There is a speedier way than the "Mechanical System" can show to fill up marshes, to drown the roar of the waves, to tame hyenas, secure agreeable environs, diversify the land, and refresh it with "rivulets of sweet water," and that is by the power of rectitude and true behavior. It is only for a little while, only occasionally, methinks, that we want a garden. Surely a good man need not be at the labor to level a hill for the sake of a prospect, or raise fruits and flowers, and construct floating islands, for the sake of a paradise. He enjoys better prospects than lie behind any hill. Where an angel travels it will be paradise all the way, but where Satan travels it will be burning marl and cinders. What says Veeshnoo Sarma? "He whose mind is at ease is possessed of all riches. Is it not the same to one whose foot is inclosed in a shoe, as if the whole surface of the earth were covered with leather?"

He who is conversant with the supernal powers will not worship these inferior deities of the wind, waves, tide, and sunshine. But we would not disparage the importance of such calculations as we have described. They are truths in physics, because they are true in ethics. The moral powers no one would presume to calculate. Suppose we could compare the moral with

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the physical, and say how many horse-power the force of love, for instance, blowing on every square foot of a man's soul, would equal. No doubt we are well aware of this force; figures would not increase our respect for it; the sunshine is equal to but one ray of its heat. The light of the sun is but the shadow of love. "The souls of men loving and fearing God," says Raleigh, "receive influence from that divine light itself, whereof the sun's clarity, and that of the stars, is by Plato called but a shadow. *Lumen est umbra Dei, Deus est Lumen Luminis.* Light is the shadow of God's brightness, who is the light of light," and, we may add, the heat of heat. Love is the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine. Its power is incalculable; it is many horse-power. It never ceases, it never slacks; it can move the globe without a resting-place; it can warm without fire; it can feed without meat; it can clothe without garments; it can shelter without roof; it can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without. But though the wisest men in all ages have labored to publish this force, and every human heart is, sooner or later, more or less, made to feel it, yet how little is actually applied to social ends! True, it is the motive-power of all successful social machinery; but as in physics we have made the elements do only a little drudgery for us,—steam to take the place of a few horses, wind of a few oars, water of a few cranks and hand-mills, — as the mechanical forces have not yet been generously and largely applied to make the physical world answer to the ideal, so the power of love has been but meanly and sparingly applied, as yet. It has patented

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only such machines as the almshouse, the hospital, and the Bible Society, while its infinite wind is still blowing, and blowing down these very structures too, from time to time. Still less are we accumulating its power, and preparing to act with greater energy at a future time. Shall we not contribute our shares to this enterprise, then?

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HERALD OF FREEDOM[1]

We had occasionally, for several years, met with a number of this spirited journal, edited, as abolitionists need not to be informed, by Nathaniel P. Rogers, once a counselor-at-law in Plymouth, still farther up the Merrimack, but now, in his riper years, come down the hills thus far, to be the Herald of Freedom to these parts. We had been refreshed not a little by the cheap cordial of his editorials, flowing like his own mountain-torrents, now clear and sparkling, now foaming and gritty, and always spiced with the essence of the fir and the Norway pine; but never dark nor muddy, nor threatening with smothered murmurs, like the rivers of the plain. The effect of one of his effusions reminds us of what the hydropathists say about the electricity in fresh spring-water, compared with that which has stood over night, to suit weak nerves. We do not know of another notable and public instance of such pure, youthful, and hearty indignation at all wrong. The Church itself must love it, if it have any heart, though he is said to have dealt rudely with its sanctity. His clean attachment to the right, however, sanctions the severest rebuke we have read.

Mr. Rogers seems to us to have occupied an honorable and manly position in these days, and in this country, making the press a living and breathing organ

[1] *Herald of Freedom.* Published weekly by the New Hampshire Anti-Slavery Society, Concord, N. H., vol. x, No. 4.

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to reach the hearts of men, and not merely "fine paper and good type," with its civil pilot sitting aft, and magnanimously waiting for the news to arrive, — the vehicle of the earliest news, but the *latest intelligence*, — recording the indubitable and last results, the marriages and deaths, alone. This editor was wide awake, and standing on the beak of his ship; not as a scientific explorer under government, but a Yankee sealer rather, who makes those unexplored continents his harbors in which to refit for more adventurous cruises. He was a fund of news and freshness in himself, — had the gift of speech, and the knack of writing; and if anything important took place in the Granite State, we might be sure that we should hear of it in good season. No other paper that we know kept pace so well with one forward wave of the restless public thought and sentiment of New England, and asserted so faithfully and ingenuously the largest liberty in all things. There was beside more unpledged poetry in his prose than in the verses of many an accepted rhymer; and we were occasionally advertised by a mellow hunter's note from his trumpet, that, unlike most reformers, his feet were still where they should be, on the turf, and that he looked out from a serener natural life into the turbid arena of politics. Nor was slavery always a sombre theme with him, but invested with the colors of his wit and fancy, and an evil to be abolished by other means than sorrow and bitterness of complaint. He will fight this fight with what cheer may be.

But to speak of his composition. It is a genuine Yankee style, without fiction, — real guessing and calculat-

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ing to some purpose, — and reminds us occasionally, as does all free, brave, and original writing, of its great master in these days, Thomas Carlyle. It has a life above grammar, and a meaning which need not be parsed to be understood. But like those same mountain-torrents, there is rather too much slope to his channel, and the rainbow sprays and evaporations go double-quick time to heaven, while the body of his water falls headlong to the plain. We would have more pause and deliberation, occasionally, if only to bring his tide to a head, — more frequent expansions of the stream, — still, bottomless, mountain tarns, perchance inland seas, and at length the deep ocean itself.

Some extracts will show in what sense he was a poet as well as a reformer. He thus raises the antislavery "war-whoop" in New Hampshire, when an important convention is to be held, sending the summons, —

"To none but the whole-hearted, fully-committed, cross-the-Rubicon spirits. . . . From rich 'old Cheshire,' from Rockingham, with her horizon setting down away to the salt sea . . . from where the sun sets behind Kearsarge, even to where he rises gloriously over *Moses Norris's* own town of *Pittsfield*, — and from Amoskeag to Ragged Mountains, — Coos — Upper Coos, home of the everlasting hills, — send out your bold advocates of human rights, wherever they lay, scattered by lonely lake, or Indian stream, or 'Grant,' or 'Location,' from the trout-haunted brooks of the Amoriscoggin, and where the adventurous streamlet takes up its mountain march for the St. Lawrence.

"Scattered and insulated men, wherever the light

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of philanthropy and liberty has beamed in upon your solitary spirits, come down to us like your streams and clouds and our own Grafton, all about among your dear hills, and your mountain-flanked valleys — whether you *home* along the swift Ammonoosuck, the cold Pemigewassett, or the ox-bowed Connecticut. . . .

"We are slow, brethren, dishonorably slow, in a cause like ours. Our feet should be as 'hinds' feet.' 'Liberty lies bleeding.' The leaden-colored wing of slavery obscures the land with its baleful shadow. Let us come together, and inquire at the hand of the Lord what is to be done."

And again; on occasion of a New England Convention in the Second-Advent Tabernacle, in Boston, he desires to try one more blast, as it were, "on Fabyan's White Mountain horn:" —

"Ho, then, people of the Bay State, — men, women, and children; children, women, and men, scattered friends of the *friendless*, wheresoever ye inhabit, — if habitations ye have, as such friends have not *always*, — along the sea-beat border of Old Essex and the Puritan Landing, and up beyond sight of the sea-cloud, among the inland hills, where the sun rises and sets upon the dry land, in that vale of the Connecticut, too fair for human content and too fertile for virtuous industry, — where deepens the haughtiest of earth's streams, on its seaward way, proud with the pride of old Massachusetts. Are there any friends of the friendless negro haunting such a valley as this? In God's name, I fear there are none, or few; for the very scene looks apathy and oblivion to the genius of humanity. I

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blow you the summons, though. Come, if any of you are there.

"And gallant little Rhode Island; *transcendent* abolitionists of the tiny Commonwealth. I need not call you. You are *called* the year round, and, instead of sleeping in your tents, stand harnessed, and with trumpets in your hands, — every one!

"Connecticut! yonder, the home of the Burleighs, the Monroes, and the Hudsons, and the native land of old George Benson! are you ready? 'All ready!'

"Maine here, off east, looking from my mountain post like an everglade. Where is your Sam. Fessenden, who stood storm-proof 'gainst New Organization in '38. Has he too much name as a jurist and orator, to be found at a New England Convention in '43? God forbid! Come one and all of you from 'Down East' to Boston, on the 30th, and let the sails of your coasters whiten all the sea-road. Alas! there are scarce enough of you to man a fishing boat. Come up mighty in your fewness."

Such timely, pure, and unpremeditated expressions of a public sentiment, such publicity of genuine indignation and humanity, as abound everywhere in this journal, are the most generous gifts which a man can make.

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WENDELL PHILLIPS BEFORE THE CONCORD LYCEUM

CONCORD, MASS., March 12, 1845.

MR. EDITOR: — We have now, for the third winter, had our spirits refreshed, and our faith in the destiny of the Commonwealth strengthened, by the presence and the eloquence of Wendell Phillips; and we wish to tender to him our thanks and our sympathy. The admission of this gentleman into the Lyceum has been strenuously opposed by a respectable portion of our fellow-citizens, who themselves, we trust, — whose descendants, at least, we know, — will be as faithful conservers of the true order, whenever that shall be the order of the day, — and in each instance the people have voted that they *would hear him*, by coming themselves and bringing their friends to the lecture-room, and being very silent that they *might* hear. We saw some men and women, who had long ago *come out, going in* once more through the free and hospitable portals of the Lyceum; and many of our neighbors confessed that they had had a "sound season" this once.

It was the speaker's aim to show what the State, and above all the Church, had to do, and now, alas! have done, with Texas and slavery, and how much, on the other hand, the individual should have to do with Church and State. These were fair themes, and not mistimed, and his words were addressed to "fit audience, *and not* few."

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We must give Mr. Phillips the credit of being a clean, erect, and what was once called a consistent man. He at least is not responsible for slavery, nor for American Independence; for the hypocrisy and superstition of the Church, nor the timidity and selfishness of the State; nor for the indifference and willing ignorance of any. He stands so distinctly, so firmly, and so effectively alone, and one honest man is so much more than a host, that we cannot but feel that he does himself injustice when he reminds us of "the American Society, which he represents." It is rare that we have the pleasure of listening to so clear and orthodox a speaker, who obviously has so few cracks or flaws in his moral nature, — who, having words at his command in a remarkable degree, has much more than words, if these should fail, in his unquestionable earnestness and integrity, — and, aside from their admiration at his rhetoric, secures the genuine respect of his audience. He unconsciously tells his biography as he proceeds, and we see him early and earnestly deliberating on these subjects, and wisely and bravely, without counsel or consent of any, occupying a ground at first from which the varying tides of public opinion cannot drive him.

No one could mistake the genuine modesty and truth with which he affirmed, when speaking of the framers of the Constitution, "I am wiser than they," who with him has improved these sixty years' experience of its working; or the uncompromising consistency and frankness of the prayer which concluded, not like the Thanksgiving proclamations, with — "God save the

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts," but — God dash it into a thousand pieces, till there shall not remain a fragment on which a man can stand, and dare not tell his name, — referring to the case of Frederick ——; to our disgrace we know not what to call him, unless Scotland will lend us the spoils of one of her Douglasses, out of history or fiction, for a season, till we be hospitable and brave enough to hear his proper name, — a fugitive slave in one more sense than we; who has proved himself the possessor of a *fair* intellect, and has won a colorless reputation in these parts; and who, we trust, will be as superior to degradation from the sympathies of Freedom, as from the antipathies of Slavery. When, said Mr. Phillips, he communicated to a New Bedford audience, the other day, his purpose of writing his life, and telling his name, and the name of his master, and the place he ran from, the murmur ran round the room, and was anxiously whispered by the sons of the Pilgrims, "He had better not!" and it was echoed under the shadow of Concord monument, "He had better not!"

We would fain express our appreciation of the freedom and steady wisdom, so rare in the reformer, with which he declared that he was not born to abolish slavery, but to do right. We have heard a few, a very few, good political speakers, who afforded us the pleasure of great intellectual power and acuteness, of soldier-like steadiness, and of a graceful and natural oratory; but in this man the audience might detect a sort of moral principle and integrity, which was more stable than their firmness, more discriminating than

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his own intellect, and more graceful than his rhetoric, which was not working for temporary or trivial ends. It is so rare and encouraging to listen to an orator who is content with another alliance than with the popular party, or even with the sympathizing school of the martyrs, who can afford sometimes to be his own auditor if the mob stay away, and hears himself without reproof, that we feel ourselves in danger of slandering all mankind by affirming that here is one who is at the same time an eloquent speaker and a righteous man.

Perhaps, on the whole, the most interesting fact elicited by these addresses, is the readiness of the people at large, of whatever sect or party, to entertain, with good will and hospitality, the most revolutionary and heretical opinions, when frankly and adequately, and in some sort cheerfully, expressed. Such clear and candid declaration of opinion served like an electuary to whet and clarify the intellect of all parties, and furnished each one with an additional argument for that right he asserted.

We consider Mr. Phillips one of the most conspicuous and efficient champions of a true Church and State now in the field, and would say to him, and such as are like him, "God speed you." If you know of any champion in the ranks of his opponents, who has the valor and courtesy even of Paynim chivalry, if not the Christian graces and refinement of this knight, you will do us a service by directing him to these fields forthwith, where the lists are now open, and he shall be hospitably entertained. For as yet the red-cross knight has shown us

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only the gallant device upon his shield, and his admirable command of his steed, prancing and curveting in the empty lists; but we wait to see who, in the actual breaking of lances, will come tumbling upon the plain.

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THOMAS CARLYLE AND HIS WORKS

THOMAS CARLYLE is a Scotchman, born about fifty years ago, "at Ecclefechan, Annandale," according to one authority. "His parents 'good farmer people,' his father an elder in the Secession church there, and a man of strong native sense, whose words were said to 'nail a subject to the wall.'" We also hear of his "excellent mother," still alive, and of "her fine old covenanting accents, concerting with his transcendental tones." He seems to have gone to school at Annan, on the shore of the Solway Frith, and there, as he himself writes, "heard of famed professors, of high matters classical, mathematical, a whole Wonderland of Knowledge," from Edward Irving, then a young man "fresh from Edinburgh, with college prizes, . . . come to see our schoolmaster, who had also been his." From this place, they say, you can look over into Wordsworth's country. Here first he may have become acquainted with Nature, with woods, such as are there, and rivers and brooks, some of whose names we have heard, and the last lapses of Atlantic billows. He got some of his education, too, more or less liberal, out of the University of Edinburgh, where, according to the same authority, he had to "support himself," partly by "private tuition, translations for the booksellers, etc.," and afterward, as we are glad to hear, "taught an academy in Dysart, at the same time that Irving was teaching in Kirkaldy," the usual middle passage of a literary life. He was destined for

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the Church, but not by the powers that rule man's life; made his literary *début* in Fraser's Magazine, long ago; read here and there in English and French, with more or less profit, we may suppose, such of us at least as are not particularly informed, and at length found some words which spoke to his condition in the German language, and set himself earnestly to unravel that mystery, — with what success many readers know.

After his marriage he "resided partly at Comely Bank, Edinburgh; and for a year or two at Craigenputtock, a wild and solitary farmhouse in the upper part of Dumfriesshire," at which last place, amid barren heather hills, he was visited by our countryman, Emerson. With Emerson he still corresponds. He was early intimate with Edward Irving, and continued to be his friend until the latter's death. Concerning this "freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul," and Carlyle's relation to him, those whom it concerns will do well to consult a notice of his death in Fraser's Magazine for 1835, reprinted in the Miscellanies. He also corresponded with Goethe. Latterly, we hear, the poet Sterling was his only intimate acquaintance in England.

He has spent the last quarter of his life in London, writing books; has the fame, as all readers know, of having made England acquainted with Germany, in late years, and done much else that is novel and remarkable in literature. He especially is the literary man of those parts. You may imagine him living in altogether a retired and simple way, with small family, in a quiet part of London, called Chelsea, a little out of the din of commerce, in "Cheyne Row," there, not

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far from the "Chelsea Hospital." "A little past this, and an old ivy-clad church, with its buried generations lying around it," writes one traveler, "you come to an antique street running at right angles with the Thames, and, a few steps from the river, you find Carlyle's name on the door." "A Scotch lass ushers you into the second story front chamber, which is the spacious workshop of the world maker." Here he sits a long time together, with many books and papers about him; many new books, we have been told, on the upper shelves, uncut, with the "author's respects" in them; in late months, with many manuscripts in an old English hand, and innumerable pamphlets, from the public libraries, relating to the Cromwellian period; now, perhaps, looking out into the street on brick and pavement, for a change, and now upon some rod of grass ground in the rear; or, perchance, he steps over to the British Museum, and makes that his studio for the time. This is the fore part of the day; that is the way with literary men commonly; and then in the afternoon, we presume, he takes a short run of a mile or so through the suburbs out into the country; we think he would run that way, though so short a trip might not take him to very sylvan or rustic places. In the meanwhile, people are calling to *see* him, from various quarters, few very worthy of being *seen* by him; "distinguished travelers from America," not a few; to all and sundry of whom he gives freely of his yet unwritten rich and flashing soliloquy, in exchange for whatever they may have to offer; speaking his English, as they say, with a "broad Scotch accent," talking, to their astonishment and to

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ours, very much as he writes, a sort of Carlylese, his discourse "coming to its climaxes, ever and anon, in long, deep, chest-shaking bursts of laughter."

He goes to Scotland sometimes, to visit his native heath-clad hills, having some interest still in the earth there; such names as Craigenputtock and Ecclefechan, which we have already quoted, stand for habitable places there to him; or he rides to the seacoast of England in his vacations, upon his horse Yankee, bought by the sale of his books here, as we have been told.

How, after all, he gets his living; what proportion of his daily bread he earns by day-labor or job-work with his pen, what he inherits, what steals, — questions whose answers are so significant, and not to be omitted in his biography, — we, alas! are unable to answer here. It may be worth the while to state that he is not a Reformer in our sense of the term, — eats, drinks, and sleeps, thinks and believes, professes and practices, not according to the New England standard, nor to the Old English wholly. Nevertheless, we are told that he is a sort of lion in certain quarters there, "an amicable centre for men of the most opposite opinions," and "listened to as an oracle," "smoking his perpetual pipe."

A rather tall, gaunt figure, with intent face, dark hair and complexion, and the air of a student; not altogether well in body, from sitting too long in his workhouse, — he, born in the Border Country and descended from moss-troopers, it may be. We have seen several pictures of him here; one, a full-length portrait, with hat and overall, if it did not tell us much,

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told the fewest lies; another, we remember, was well said to have "too combed a look;" one other also we have seen in which we discern some features of the man we are thinking of; but the only ones worth remembering, after all, are those which he has unconsciously drawn of himself.

When we remember how these volumes came over to us, with their encouragement and provocation from month to month, and what commotion they created in many private breasts, we wonder that the country did not ring, from shore to shore, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with its greeting; and the Boones and Crocketts of the West make haste to hail him, whose wide humanity embraces them too. Of all that the packets have brought over to us, has there been any richer cargo than this? What else has been English news for so long a season? What else, of late years, has been England to us, — to us who read books, we mean? Unless we remembered it as the scene where the age of Wordsworth was spending itself, and a few younger muses were trying their wings, and from time to time as the residence of Landor, Carlyle alone, since the death of Coleridge, has kept the promise of England. It is the best apology for all the bustle and the sin of commerce, that it has made us acquainted with the thoughts of this man. Commerce would not concern us much if it were not for such results as this. New England owes him a debt which she will be slow to recognize. His earlier essays reached us at a time when Coleridge's were the only recent words which had made any notable impression so far, and they found a field unoccupied by him,

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before yet any words of moment had been uttered in our midst. He had this advantage, too, in a teacher, that he stood near to his pupils; and he has no doubt afforded reasonable encouragement and sympathy to many an independent but solitary thinker.

It is remarkable, but on the whole, perhaps, not to be lamented, that the world is so unkind to a new book. Any distinguished traveler who comes to our shores is likely to get more dinners and speeches of welcome than he can well dispose of, but the best books, if noticed at all, meet with coldness and suspicion, or, what is worse, gratuitous, off-hand criticism. It is plain that the reviewers, both here and abroad, do not know how to dispose of this man. They approach him too easily, as if he were one of the men of letters about town, who grace Mr. Somebody's administration, merely; but he already belongs to literature, and depends neither on the favor of reviewers, nor the honesty of booksellers, nor the pleasure of readers for his success. He has more to impart than to receive from his generation. He is another such a strong and finished workman in his craft as Samuel Johnson was, and, like him, makes the literary class respectable; since few are yet out of their apprenticeship, or, even if they learn to be able writers, are at the same time able and valuable thinkers. The aged and critical eye, especially, is incapacitated to appreciate the works of this author. To such their meaning is impalpable and evanescent, and they seem to abound only in obstinate mannerisms, Germanisms, and whimsical ravings of all kinds, with now and then an unaccountably true and sensible remark. On the

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strength of this last, Carlyle is admitted to have what is called genius. We hardly know an old man to whom these volumes are not hopelessly sealed. The language, they say, is foolishness and a stumbling-block to them; but to many a clear-headed boy they are plainest English, and dispatched with such hasty relish as his bread and milk. The fathers wonder how it is that the children take to this diet so readily, and digest it with so little difficulty. They shake their heads with mistrust at their free and easy delight, and remark that "Mr. Carlyle is a very learned man;" for they, too, not to be out of fashion, have got grammar and dictionary, if the truth were known, and with the best faith cudgeled their brains to get a little way into the jungle, and they could not but confess, as often as they found the clue, that it was as intricate as Blackstone to follow, if you read it honestly. But merely reading, even with the best intentions, is not enough: you must almost have written these books yourself. Only he who has had the good fortune to read them in the nick of time, in the most perceptive and recipient season of life, can give any adequate account of them.

Many have tasted of this well with an odd suspicion, as if it were some fountain Arethuse which had flowed under the sea from Germany, as if the materials of his books had lain in some garret there, in danger of being appropriated for waste-paper. Over what German ocean, from what Hercynian forest, he has been imported, piecemeal, into England, or whether he has now all arrived, we are not informed. This article is not invoiced in Hamburg nor in London. Perhaps it

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was contraband. However, we suspect that this sort of goods cannot be imported in this way. No matter how skillful the stevedore, all things being got into sailing trim, wait for a Sunday, and aft wind, and then weigh anchor, and run up the main-sheet, — straightway what of transcendent and permanent value is there resists the aft wind, and will doggedly stay behind that Sunday, — it does not travel Sundays; while biscuit and pork make headway, and sailors cry heave-yo! It must part company, if it open a seam. It is not quite safe to send out a venture in this kind, unless yourself go supercargo. Where a man goes, there he is; but the slightest virtue is immovable, — it is real estate, not personal; who would keep it, must consent to be bought and sold with it.

However, we need not dwell on this charge of a German extraction, it being generally admitted, by this time, that Carlyle is English, and an inhabitant of London. He has the English for his mother-tongue, though with a Scotch accent, or never so many accents, and thoughts also, which are the legitimate growth of native soil, to utter therewith. His style is eminently colloquial, and no wonder it is strange to meet with in a book. It is not literary or classical; it has not the music of poetry, nor the pomp of philosophy, but the rhythms and cadences of conversation endlessly repeated. It resounds with emphatic, natural, lively, stirring tones, muttering, rattling, exploding, like shells and shot, and with like execution. So far as it is a merit in composition that the written answer to the spoken word, and the spoken word to a fresh and per-

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tinent thought in the mind, as well as to the half thoughts, the tumultuary misgivings and expectancies, this author is, perhaps, not to be matched in literature.

He is no mystic, either, more than Newton or Arkwright or Davy, and tolerates none. Not one obscure line, or half line, did he ever write. His meaning lies plain as the daylight, and he who runs may read; indeed, only he who runs *can* read, and keep up with the meaning. It has the distinctness of picture to his mind, and he tells us only what he sees printed in largest English type upon the face of things. He utters substantial English thoughts in plainest English dialects; for it must be confessed, he speaks more than one of these. All the shires of England, and all the shires of Europe, are laid under contribution to his genius; for to be English does not mean to be exclusive and narrow, and adapt one's self to the apprehension of his nearest neighbor only. And yet no writer is more thoroughly Saxon. In the translation of those fragments of Saxon poetry, we have met with the same rhythm that occurs so often in his poem on the French Revolution. And if you would know where many of those obnoxious Carlyleisms and Germanisms came from, read the best of Milton's prose, read those speeches of Cromwell which he has brought to light, or go and listen once more to your mother's tongue. So much for his German extraction.

Indeed, for fluency and skill in the use of the English tongue, he is a master unrivaled. His felicity and power of expression surpass even his special merits as historian and critic. Therein his experience has not

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failed him, but furnished him with such a store of winged, ay and legged words, as only a London life, perchance, could give account of. We had not understood the wealth of the language before. Nature is ransacked, and all the resorts and purlieus of humanity are taxed, to furnish the fittest symbol for his thought. He does not go to the dictionary, the word-book, but to the word-manufactory itself, and has made endless work for the lexicographers. Yes, he has that same English for his mother-tongue that you have, but with him it is no dumb, muttering, mumbling faculty, concealing the thoughts, but a keen, unwearied, resistless weapon. He has such command of it as neither you nor I have; and it would be well for any who have a lost horse to advertise, or a town-meeting warrant, or a sermon, or a letter to write, to study this universal letter-writer, for he knows more than the grammar or the dictionary.

The style is worth attending to, as one of the most important features of the man which we at this distance can discern. It is for once quite equal to the matter. It can carry all its load, and never breaks down nor staggers. His books are solid and workmanlike, as all that England does; and they are graceful and readable also. They tell of huge labor done, well done, and all the rubbish swept away, like the bright cutlery which glitters in shop windows, while the coke and ashes, the turnings, filings, dust, and borings lie far away at Birmingham, unheard of. He is a masterly clerk, scribe, reporter, writer. He can reduce to writing most things, — gestures, winks, nods, significant looks, patois,

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brogue, accent, pantomime, and how much that had passed for silence before does he represent by written words. The countryman who puzzled the city lawyer, requiring him to write, among other things, his call to his horses, would hardly have puzzled him; he would have found a word for it, all right and classical, that would have started his team for him. Consider the ceaseless tide of speech forever flowing in countless cellars, garrets, *parlors;* that of the French, says Carlyle, "only ebbs toward the short hours of night," and what a drop in the bucket is the printed word. Feeling, thought, speech, writing, and, we might add, poetry, inspiration, — for so the circle is completed; how they gradually dwindle at length, passing through successive colanders, into your history and classics, from the roar of the ocean, the murmur of the forest, to the squeak of a mouse; so much only parsed and spelt out, and punctuated, at last. The few who can talk like a book, they only get reported commonly. But this writer reports a new *lieferung*.

One wonders how so much, after all, was expressed in the old way, so much here depends upon the emphasis, tone, pronunciation, style, and spirit of the reading. No writer uses so profusely all the aids to intelligibility which the printer's art affords. You wonder how others had contrived to write so many pages without emphatic or italicized words, they are so expressive, so natural, so indispensable here, as if none had ever used the demonstrative pronouns demonstratively before. In another's sentences the thought, though it may be immortal, is as it were embalmed,

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and does not *strike* you, but here it is so freshly living, even the body of it not having passed through the ordeal of death, that it stirs in the very extremities, and the smallest particles and pronouns are all alive with it. It is not simple dictionary *it*, yours or mine, but IT. The words did not come at the command of grammar, but of a tyrannous, inexorable meaning; not like standing soldiers, by vote of Parliament, but any able-bodied countryman pressed into the service, for "Sire, it is not a revolt, it is a revolution."

We have never heard him speak, but we should say that Carlyle was a rare talker. He has broken the ice, and streams freely forth like a spring torrent. He does not trace back the stream of his thought, silently adventurous, up to its fountain-head, but is borne away with it, as it rushes through his brain like a torrent to overwhelm and fertilize. He holds a talk with you. His audience is such a tumultuous mob of thirty thousand as assembled at the University of Paris, before printing was invented. Philosophy, on the other hand, does not talk, but write, or, when it comes personally before an audience, lecture or read; and therefore it must be read to-morrow, or a thousand years hence. But the talker must naturally be attended to at once; he does not talk on without an audience; the winds do not long bear the sound of his voice. Think of Carlyle reading his "French Revolution" to any audience. One might say it was never written, but spoken; and thereafter reported and printed, that those not within sound of his voice might know something about it. Some men read to you something which they have written in

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a dead *language*, of course, but it may be in a living *letter*, in a Syriac, or Roman, or Runic character. Men must *speak* English who can *write* Sanskrit; they must speak a modern language who write, perchance, an ancient and universal one. We do not live in those days when the learned used a learned language. There is no writing of Latin with Carlyle; but as Chaucer, with all reverence to Homer, and Virgil, and Messieurs the Normans, sung his poetry in the homely Saxon tongue, and Locke has at least the merit of having done philosophy into English, so Carlyle has done a different philosophy still further into English, and thrown open the doors of literature and criticism to the populace.

Such a style, — so diversified and variegated! It is like the face of a country; it is like a New England landscape, with farmhouses and villages, and cultivated spots, and belts of forests and blueberry swamps round about, with the fragrance of shad-blossoms and violets on certain winds. And as for the reading of it, it is novel enough to the reader who has used only the diligence, and old line mail-coach. It is like traveling, sometimes on foot, sometimes in a gig tandem; sometimes in a full coach, over highways, mended and unmended, for which you will prosecute the town; on level roads, through French departments, by Simplon roads over the Alps; and now and then he hauls up for a relay, and yokes in an unbroken colt of a Pegasus for a leader, driving off by cart-paths, and across lots, by corduroy roads and gridiron bridges; and where the bridges are gone, not even a string-piece left, and the

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reader has to set his breast and swim. You have got an expert driver this time, who has driven ten thousand miles, and was never known to upset; can drive six in hand on the edge of a precipice, and touch the leaders anywhere with his snapper.

With wonderful art he grinds into paint for his picture all his moods and experiences, so that all his forces may be brought to the encounter. Apparently writing without a particular design or responsibility, setting down his soliloquies from time to time, taking advantage of all his humors, when at length the hour comes to declare himself, he puts down in plain English, without quotation marks, what he, Thomas Carlyle, is ready to defend in the face of the world, and fathers the rest, often quite as defensible, only more modest, or plain-spoken, or insinuating, upon "Sauerteig," or some other gentleman long employed on the subject. Rolling his subject how many ways in his mind, he meets it now face to face, wrestling with it at arm's length, and striving to get it down, or throw it over his head; and if that will not do, or whether it will do or not, tries the back stitch and side hug with it, and downs it again, scalps it, draws and quarters it, hangs it in chains, and leaves it to the winds and dogs. With his brows knit, his mind made up, his will resolved and resistless, he advances, crashing his way through the host of weak, half-formed, *dilettante* opinions, honest and dishonest ways of thinking, with their standards raised, sentimentalities and conjectures, and tramples them all into dust. See how he prevails; you don't even hear the groans of the wounded and dying. Certainly it is not

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so well worth the while to look through any man's eyes at history, for the time, as through his; and his way of looking at things is fastest getting adopted by his generation.

It is not in man to determine what his style shall be. He might as well determine what his thoughts shall be. We would not have had him write always as in the chapter on Burns, and the Life of Schiller, and elsewhere. No; his thoughts were ever irregular and impetuous. Perhaps as he grows older and writes more he acquires a truer expression; it is in some respects manlier, freer, struggling up to a level with its fountain-head. We think it is the richest prose style we know of.

Who cares what a man's style is, so it is intelligible, — as intelligible as his thought. Literally and really, the style is no more than the *stylus*, the pen he writes with; and it is not worth scraping and polishing, and gilding, unless it will write his thoughts the better for it. It is something for use, and not to look at. The question for us is, not whether Pope had a fine style, wrote with a peacock's feather, but whether he uttered useful thoughts. Translate a book a dozen times from one language to another, and what becomes of its style? Most books would be worn out and disappear in this ordeal. The pen which wrote it is soon destroyed, but the poem survives. We believe that Carlyle has, after all, more readers, and is better known to-day for this very originality of style, and that posterity will have reason to thank him for emancipating the language, in some measure, from the fetters which a merely con-

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servative, aimless, and pedantic literary class had imposed upon it, and setting an example of greater freedom and naturalness. No man's thoughts are new, but the style of their expression is the never-failing novelty which cheers and refreshes men. If we were to answer the question, whether the mass of men, as we know them, talk as the standard authors and reviewers write, or rather as this man writes, we should say that he alone begins to write their language at all, and that the former is, for the most part, the mere *effigies* of a language, not the best method of concealing one's thoughts even, but frequently a method of doing without thoughts at all.

In his graphic description of Richter's style, Carlyle describes his own pretty nearly; and no doubt he first got his own tongue loosened at that fountain, and was inspired by it to equal freedom and originality. "The language," as he says of Richter, "groans with indescribable metaphors and allusions to all things, human and divine, flowing onward, not like a river, but like an inundation; circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling, now this way, now that;" but in Carlyle, "the proper current" never "sinks out of sight amid the boundless uproar." Again: "His very language is Titanian, — deep, strong, tumultuous, shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes."

In short, if it is desirable that a man be eloquent, that he talk much, and address himself to his own age mainly, then this is not a bad style of doing it. But if it is desired rather that he pioneer into unexplored

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regions of thought, and speak to silent centuries to come, then, indeed, we could wish that he had cultivated the style of Goethe more, that of Richter less; not that Goethe's is the kind of utterance most to be prized by mankind, but it will serve for a model of the best that can be successfully cultivated,

But for style, and fine writing, and Augustan ages, that is but a poor style, and vulgar writing, and a degenerate age, which allows us to remember these things. This man has something to communicate. Carlyle's are not, in the common sense, works of art in their origin and aim; and yet, perhaps, no living English writer evinces an equal literary talent. They are such works of art only as the plow and corn-mill and steam-engine, — not as pictures and statues. Others speak with greater emphasis to scholars, as such, but none so earnestly and effectually to all who can read. Others give their advice, he gives his sympathy also. It is no small praise that he does not take upon himself the airs, has none of the whims, none of the pride, the nice vulgarities, the starched, impoverished isolation, and cold glitter of the spoiled children of genius. He does not need to husband his pearl, but excels by a greater humanity and sincerity.

He is singularly serious and untrivial. We are everywhere impressed by the rugged, unwearied, and rich sincerity of the man. We are sure that he never sacrificed one jot of his honest thought to art or whim, but to utter himself in the most direct and effectual way, — that is the endeavor. These are merits which will wear well. When time has worn deeper into the sub-

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stance of these books, this grain will appear. No such sermons have come to us here out of England, in late years, as those of this preacher, — sermons to kings, and sermons to peasants, and sermons to all intermediate classes. It is in vain that John Bull, or any of his cousins, turns a deaf ear, and pretends not to hear them: nature will not soon be weary of repeating them. There are words less obviously true, more for the ages to hear, perhaps, but none so impossible for this age not to hear. What a cutting cimeter was that "Past and Present," going through heaps of silken stuffs, and glibly through the necks of men, too, without their knowing it, leaving no trace! He has the earnestness of a prophet. In an age of pedantry and dilettantism, he has no grain of these in his composition. There is nowhere else, surely, in recent readable English, or other books, such direct and effectual teaching, reproving, encouraging, stimulating, earnestly, vehemently, almost like Mahomet, like Luther; not looking behind him to see how his *Opera Omnia* will look, but forward to other work to be done. His writings are a gospel to the young of this generation; they will hear his manly, brotherly speech with responsive joy, and press forward to older or newer gospels.

We should omit a main attraction in these books, if we said nothing of their humor. Of this indispensable pledge of sanity, without some leaven of which the abstruse thinker may justly be suspected of mysticism, fanaticism, or insanity, there is a superabundance in Carlyle. Especially the transcendental philosophy

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needs the leaven of humor to render it light and digestible. In his later and longer works it is an unfailing accompaniment, reverberating through pages and chapters, long sustained without effort. The very punctuation, the italics, the quotation marks, the blank spaces and dashes, and the capitals, each and all are pressed into its service.

Carlyle's humor is vigorous and titanic, and has more sense in it than the sober philosophy of many another. It is not to be disposed of by laughter and smiles merely; it gets to be too serious for that: only they may laugh who are not hit by it. For those who love a merry jest, this is a strange kind of fun,—rather too practical joking, if they understand it. The pleasant humor which the public loves is but the innocent pranks of the ballroom, harmless flow of animal spirits, the light plushy pressure of dandy pumps, in comparison. But when an elephant takes to treading on your corns, why then you are lucky if you sit high, or wear cowhide. His humor is always subordinate to a serious purpose, though often the real charm for the reader is not so much in the essential progress and final upshot of the chapter as in this indirect side-light illustration of every hue. He sketches first, with strong, practical English pencil, the essential features in outline, black on white, more faithfully than Dryasdust would have done, telling us wisely whom and what to mark, to save time, and then with brush of camel's-hair, or sometimes with more expeditious swab, he lays on the bright and fast colors of his humor everywhere. One piece of solid work, be it known, we have determined to do,

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about which let there be no jesting, but all things else under the heavens, to the right and left of that, are for the time fair game. To us this humor is not wearisome, as almost every other is. Rabelais, for instance, is intolerable; one chapter is better than a volume, — it may be sport to him, but it is death to us. A mere humorist, indeed, is a most unhappy man; and his readers are most unhappy also.

Humor is not so distinct a quality as, for the purposes of criticism, it is commonly regarded, but allied to every, even the divinest faculty. The familiar and cheerful conversation about every hearthside, if it be analyzed, will be found to be sweetened by this principle. There is not only a never-failing, pleasant, and earnest humor kept up there, embracing the domestic affairs, the dinner, and the scolding, but there is also a constant run upon the neighbors, and upon Church and State, and to cherish and maintain this, in a great measure, the fire is kept burning, and the dinner provided. There will be neighbors, parties to a very genuine, even romantic friendship, whose whole audible salutation and intercourse, abstaining from the usual cordial expressions, grasping of hands, or affectionate farewells, consists in the mutual play and interchange of a genial and healthy humor, which excepts nothing, not even themselves, in its lawless range. The child plays continually, if you will let it, and all its life is a sort of practical humor of a very pure kind, often of so fine and ethereal a nature, that its parents, its uncles and cousins, can in no wise participate in it, but must stand aloof in silent admiration, and reverence even.

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The more quiet the more profound it is. Even Nature is observed to have her playful moods or aspects, of which man seems sometimes to be the sport.

But, after all, we could sometimes dispense with the humor, though unquestionably incorporated in the blood, if it were replaced by this author's gravity. We should not apply to himself, without qualification, his remarks on the humor of Richter. With more repose in his inmost being, his humor would become more thoroughly genial and placid. Humor is apt to imply but a half satisfaction at best. In his pleasantest and most genial hour, man smiles but as the globe smiles, and the works of nature. The fruits *dry* ripe, and much as we relish some of them in their green and pulpy state, we lay up for our winter store, not out of these, but the rustling autumnal harvests. Though we never weary of this vivacious wit, while we are perusing its work, yet when we remember it from afar, we sometimes feel balked and disappointed, missing the security, the simplicity, and frankness, even the occasional magnanimity of acknowledged dullness and bungling. This never-failing success and brilliant talent become a reproach.

Besides, humor does not wear well. It is commonly enough said, that a joke will not bear repeating. The deepest humor will not keep. Humors do not circulate but stagnate, or circulate partially. In the oldest literature, in the Hebrew, the Hindoo, the Persian, the Chinese, it is rarely humor, even the most divine, which still survives, but the most sober and private, painful or joyous thoughts, maxims of duty, to which the life

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of all men may be referred. After time has sifted the literature of a people, there is left only their SCRIPTURE, for that is WRITING, *par excellence*. This is as true of the poets, as of the philosophers and moralists by profession; for what subsides in any of these is the moral only, to reappear as dry land at some remote epoch.

We confess that Carlyle's humor is rich, deep, and variegated, in direct communication with the backbone and risible muscles of the globe, — and there is nothing like it; but much as we relish this jovial, this rapid and delugeous way of conveying one's views and impressions, when we would not converse but meditate, we pray for a man's diamond edition of his thought, without the colored illuminations in the margin, — the fishes and dragons and unicorns, the red or the blue ink, but its initial letter in distinct skeleton type, and the whole so clipped and condensed down to the very essence of it, that time will have little to do. We know not but we shall immigrate soon, and would fain take with us all the treasures of the East; and all kinds of *dry*, portable soups, in small tin canisters, which contain whole herds of English beeves boiled down, will be acceptable.

The difference between this flashing, fitful writing and pure philosophy is the difference between flame and light. The flame, indeed, yields light; but when we are so near as to observe the flame, we are apt to be incommoded by the heat and smoke. But the sun, that old Platonist, is set so far off in the heavens, that only a genial summer heat and ineffable daylight can reach us. But many a time, we confess, in wintry

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weather, we have been glad to forsake the sunlight, and warm us by these Promethean flames. Carlyle must undoubtedly plead guilty to the charge of mannerism. He not only has his vein, but his peculiar manner of working it. He has a style which can be imitated, and sometimes is an imitator of himself.

Certainly, no critic has anywhere said what is more to the purpose than this which Carlyle's own writings furnish, which we quote, as well for its intrinsic merit as for its pertinence here. "It is true," says he, thinking of Richter, "the beaten paths of literature lead the safeliest to the goal; and the talent pleases us most which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws; Sophocles, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and, in Richter's own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true; and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion." And again, in the chapter on Goethe, "We read Goethe for years before we come to see wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists! It seems quite a simple style, [that of his?] remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short, its commonness; and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles." And this, too, translated for us by the same pen from Schiller, which we will apply not merely to the outward form of his works, but to their inner form and substance. He is speaking of the artist. "Let some beneficent divinity

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snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but, dreadful, like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it. The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time; nay, from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature."

But enough of this. Our complaint is already out of all proportion to our discontent.

Carlyle's works, it is true, have not the stereotyped success which we call classic. They are a rich but inexpensive entertainment, at which we are not concerned lest the host has strained or impoverished himself to feed his guests. It is not the most lasting word, nor the loftiest wisdom, but rather the word which comes last. For his genius it was reserved to give expression to the thoughts which were throbbing in a million breasts. He has plucked the ripest fruit in the public garden; but this fruit already least concerned the tree that bore it, which was rather perfecting the bud at the foot of the leaf-stalk. His works are not to be studied, but read with a swift satisfaction. Their flavor and gust is like what poets tell of the froth of wine, which can only be tasted once and hastily. On a review we can never find the pages we had read. Yet they are in some degree true natural products in this respect. All things are but once, and never repeated. These works were de-

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signed for such complete success that they serve but for a single occasion.

But he is willfully and pertinaciously unjust, even scurrilous, impolite, ungentlemanly; calls us "Imbeciles," "Dilettants," "Philistines," implying sometimes what would not sound well expressed. If he would adopt the newspaper style, and take back these hard names — But where is the reader who does not derive some benefit from these epithets, applying them to himself?

He is, in fact, the best tempered, and not the least impartial of reviewers. He goes out of his way to do justice to profligates and quacks. There is somewhat even Christian, in the rarest and most peculiar sense, in his universal brotherliness, his simple, childlike endurance, and earnest, honest endeavor, with sympathy for the like. Carlyle, to adopt his own classification, is himself the hero as literary man. There is no more notable workingman in England, in Manchester or Birmingham, or the mines round about. We know not how many hours a day he toils, nor for what wages, exactly: we only know the results for us.

Notwithstanding the very genuine, admirable, and loyal tributes to Burns, Schiller, Goethe, and others, Carlyle is not a critic of poetry. In the book of heroes, Shakespeare, the hero as poet, comes off rather slimly. His sympathy, as we said, is with the men of endeavor; not using the life got, but still bravely getting their life. "In fact," as he says of Cromwell, "everywhere we have to notice the decisive practical *eye* of this man, how he drives toward the practical and practicable;

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has a genuine insight into what *is* fact." You must have very stout legs to get noticed at all by him. He is thoroughly English in his love of practical men, and dislike for cant, and ardent, enthusiastic heads that are not supported by any legs. He would kindly knock them down that they may regain some vigor by touching their mother earth. We have often wondered how he ever found out Burns, and must still refer a good share of his delight in him to neighborhood and early association. The Lycidas and Comus, appearing in Blackwood's Magazine, would probably go unread by him, nor lead him to expect a Paradise Lost. The condition-of-England question is a practical one. The condition of England demands a hero, not a poet. Other things demand a poet; the poet answers other demands. Carlyle in London, with this question pressing on him so urgently, sees no occasion for minstrels and rhapsodists there. Kings may have their bards when there are any kings. Homer would *certainly* go a-begging there. He lives in Chelsea, not on the plains of Hindostan, nor on the prairies of the West, where settlers are scarce, and a man must at least go *whistling* to himself.

What he says of poetry is rapidly uttered, and suggestive of a thought, rather than the deliberate development of any. He answers your question, What is poetry? by writing a special poem, as that Norse one, for instance, in the Book of Heroes, altogether wild and original; — answers your question, What is light? by kindling a blaze which dazzles you, and pales sun and moon, and not as a peasant might, by opening a shutter.

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Carlyle is not a *seer*, but a brave looker-on and *reviewer;* not the most free and catholic observer of men and events, for they are likely to find him preoccupied, but unexpectedly free and catholic when they fall within the focus of his lens. He does not live in the present hour, and read men and books as they occur for his theme, but having chosen this, he directs his studies to this end. If we look again at his page, we are apt to retract somewhat that we have said. Often a genuine poetic feeling dawns through it, like the texture of the earth seen through the dead grass and leaves in the spring. The "History of the French Revolution" is a poem, at length translated into prose, — an Iliad, indeed, as he himself has it, — "The destructive wrath of Sansculottism, this is what we speak, having unhappily no voice for singing."

One improvement we could suggest in this last, as indeed in most epics, — that he should let in the sun oftener upon his picture. It does not often enough appear, but it is all revolution, the old way of human life turned simply bottom upward, so that when at length we are inadvertently reminded of the "Brest Shipping," a St. Domingo colony, and that anybody thinks of owning plantations, and simply turning up the soil there, and that now at length, after some years of this revolution, there is a falling off in the importation of sugar, we feel a queer surprise. Had they not sweetened their water with revolution then? It would be well if there were several chapters headed "Work for the Month," — Revolution-work inclusive, of course, — "Altitude of the Sun," "State of the Crops and Markets," "Me-

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teorological Observations," "Attractive Industry," "Day Labor," etc., just to remind the reader that the French peasantry did something beside go without breeches, burn châteaus, get ready knotted cords, and embrace and throttle one another by turns. These things are sometimes hinted at, but they deserve a notice more in proportion to their importance. We want not only a background to the picture, but a ground under the feet also. We remark, too, occasionally, an unphilosophical habit, common enough elsewhere, in Alison's History of Modern Europe, for instance, of saying, undoubtedly with effect, that if a straw had not fallen this way or that, why then — but, of course, it is as easy in philosophy to make kingdoms rise and fall as straws.

The poet is blithe and cheery ever, and as well as nature. Carlyle has not the simple Homeric health of Wordsworth, nor the deliberate philosophic turn of Coleridge, nor the scholastic taste of Landor, but, though sick and under restraint, the constitutional vigor of one of his old Norse heroes, struggling in a lurid light, with Jötuns still, striving to throw the old woman, and "she was Time," — striving to lift the big cat, and that was "the Great World-Serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps up the whole created world." The smith, though so brawny and tough, I should not call the healthiest man. There is too much shopwork, too great extremes of heat and cold, and incessant ten-pound-ten and thrashing of the anvil, in his life. But the haymaker's is a true sunny perspiration, produced by the extreme of summer heat only, and conversant with the

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blast of the zephyr, not of the forge-bellows. We know very well the nature of this man's sadness, but we do not know the nature of his gladness.

The poet will maintain serenity in spite of all disappointments. He is expected to preserve an unconcerned and healthy outlook over the world, while he lives. *Philosophia practica est eruditionis meta,* — Philosophy practiced is the goal of learning; and for that other, *Oratoris est celare artem,* we might read, *Herois est celare pugnam,* — the hero will conceal his struggles. Poetry is the only life got, the only work done, the only pure product and free labor of man, performed only when he has put all the world under his feet, and conquered the last of his foes.

Carlyle speaks of Nature with a certain unconscious pathos for the most part. She is to him a receded but ever memorable splendor, casting still a reflected light over all his scenery. As we read his books here in New England, where there are potatoes enough, and every man can get his living peacefully and sportively as the birds and bees, and need think no more of that, it seems to us as if by the world he often meant London, at the head of the tide upon the Thames, the sorest place on the face of the earth, the very citadel of conservatism.

In his writings, we should say that he, as conspicuously as any, though with little enough expressed or even conscious sympathy, represents the Reformer class, and all the better for not being the acknowledged leader of any. In him the universal plaint is most settled, unappeasable, and serious. Until a thousand named and nameless grievances are righted, there will be no repose

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for him in the lap of nature, or the seclusion of science and literature. By foreseeing it, he hastens the crisis in the affairs of England, and is as good as many years added to her history.

To do himself justice, and set some of his readers right, he should give us some transcendent hero at length, to rule his demigods and Titans; develop, perhaps, his reserved and dumb reverence for Christ, not speaking to a London or Church of England audience merely. Let *not* "sacred silence meditate that sacred matter" forever, but let us have sacred speech and sacred scripture thereon.

Every man will include in his list of worthies those whom he himself best represents. Carlyle, and our countryman Emerson, whose place and influence must ere long obtain a more distinct recognition, are, to a certain extent, the complement of each other. The age could not do with one of them, it cannot do with both. To make a broad and rude distinction, to suit our present purpose, the former, as critic, deals with the men of action, — Mahomet, Luther, Cromwell; the latter with the thinkers, — Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe; for, though both have written upon Goethe, they do not meet in him. The one has more sympathy with the heroes, or practical reformers, the other with the observers, or philosophers. Put their worthies together, and you will have a pretty fair representation of mankind; yet with one or more memorable exceptions. To say nothing of Christ, who yet awaits a just appreciation from literature, the peacefully practical hero, whom Columbus may represent, is obviously slighted; but above

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and after all, the Man of the Age, come to be called workingman, it is obvious that none yet speaks to his condition, for the speaker is not yet in his condition.

Like speaks to like only; labor to labor, philosophy to philosophy, criticism to criticism, poetry to poetry. Literature speaks how much still to the past, how little to the future, how much to the East, how little to the West, —

> In the East fames are won,
> In the West deeds are done.

One merit in Carlyle, let the subject be what it may, is the freedom of prospect he allows, the entire absence of cant and dogma. He removes many cartloads of rubbish, and leaves open a broad highway. His writings are all unfenced on the side of the future and the possible. Though he does but inadvertently direct our eyes to the open heavens, nevertheless he lets us wander broadly underneath, and shows them to us reflected in innumerable pools and lakes.

These volumes contain not the highest, but a very practicable wisdom, which startles and provokes, rather than informs us. Carlyle does not oblige us to think; we have thought enough for him already, but he compels us to act. We accompany him rapidly through an endless gallery of pictures, and glorious reminiscences of experiences unimproved. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There is no calm philosophy of life here, such as you might put at the end of the Almanac, to hang over the farmer's hearth, —

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how men shall live in these winter, in these summer days. No philosophy, properly speaking, of love, or friendship, or religion, or politics, or education, or nature, or spirit; perhaps a nearer approach to a philosophy of kingship, and of the place of the literary man, than of anything else. A rare preacher, with prayer, and psalm, and sermon, and benediction, but no contemplation of man's life from the serene Oriental ground, nor yet from the stirring Occidental. No thanksgiving sermon for the holydays, or the Easter vacations, when all men submit to float on the full currents of life. When we see with what spirits, though with little heroism enough, woodchoppers, drovers, and apprentices take and spend life, playing all day long, sunning themselves, shading themselves, eating, drinking, sleeping, we think that the philosophy of their life written would be such a level natural history as the Gardener's Calendar and the works of the early botanists, inconceivably slow to come to practical conclusions.

There is no philosophy here for philosophers, only as every man is said to have his philosophy; no system but such as is the man himself, — and, indeed, he stands compactly enough; — no progress beyond the first assertion and challenge, as it were, with trumpet blast. One thing is certain, — that we had best be doing something in good earnest henceforth forever; that 's an indispensable philosophy. The before impossible precept, "*Know thyself*," he translates into the partially possible one, "*Know what thou canst work at.*" "Sartor Resartus" is, perhaps, the sunniest and most philosoph-

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ical, as it is the most autobiographical of his works, in which he drew most largely on the experience of his youth. But we miss everywhere a calm depth, like a lake, even stagnant, and must submit to rapidity and whirl, as on skates, with all kinds of skillful and antic motions, sculling, sliding, cutting punch-bowls and rings, forward and backward. The talent is very nearly equal to the genius. Sometimes it would be preferable to wade slowly through a Serbonian bog, and feel the juices of the meadow.

Beside some philosophers of larger vision, Carlyle stands like an honest, half-despairing boy, grasping at some details only of their world systems. Philosophy, certainly, is some account of truths the fragments and very insignificant parts of which man will practice in this workshop; truths infinite and in harmony with infinity, in respect to which the very objects and ends of the so-called practical philosopher will be mere propositions, like the rest. It would be no reproach to a philosopher, that he knew the future better than the past, or even than the present. It is better worth knowing. He will prophesy, tell what is to be, or, in other words, what alone is, under appearances, laying little stress on the boiling of the pot, or, the condition-of-England question. He has no more to do with the condition of England than with her national debt, which a vigorous generation would not inherit. The philosopher's conception of things will, above all, be truer than other men's, and his philosophy will subordinate all the circumstances of life. To live like a philosopher is to live, not foolishly, like other men, but wisely and according

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to universal laws. If Carlyle does not take two steps in philosophy, are there any who take three? Philosophy, having crept clinging to the rocks so far, puts out its feelers many ways in vain. It would be hard to surprise him by the relation of any important human experience, but in some nook or corner of his works you will find that this, too, was sometimes dreamed of in his philosophy.

To sum up our most serious objections in a few words, we should say that Carlyle indicates a depth — and we mean not impliedly, but distinctly — which he neglects to fathom. We want to know more about that which he wants to know as well. If any luminous star or undissolvable nebula is visible from his station which is not visible from ours, the interests of science require that the fact be communicated to us. The universe expects every man to do his duty in his parallel of latitude. We want to hear more of his inmost life; his hymn and prayer more; his elegy and eulogy less; that he should speak more from his character, and less from his talent; communicate centrally with his readers, and not by a side; that he should say what he believes, without suspecting that men disbelieve it, out of his never-misunderstood nature. His genius can cover all the land with gorgeous palaces, but the reader does not abide in them, but pitches his tent rather in the desert and on the mountain-peak.

When we look about for something to quote, as the fairest specimen of the man, we confess that we labor under an unusual difficulty; for his philosophy is so little of the proverbial or sentential kind, and opens

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so gradually, rising insensibly from the reviewer's level, and developing its thought completely and in detail, that we look in vain for the brilliant passages, for point and antithesis, and must end by quoting his works entire. What in a writer of less breadth would have been the proposition which would have bounded his discourse, his column of victory, his Pillar of Hercules, and *ne plus ultra*, is in Carlyle frequently the same thought unfolded; no Pillar of Hercules, but a considerable prospect, north and south, along the Atlantic coast. There are other pillars of Hercules, like beacons and lighthouses, still further in the horizon, toward Atlantis, set up by a few ancient and modern travelers; but, so far as this traveler goes, he clears and colonizes, and all the surplus population of London is bound thither at once. What we would quote is, in fact, his vivacity, and not any particular wisdom or sense, which last is ever synonymous with sentence (*sententia*), as in his contemporaries Coleridge, Landor, and Wordsworth. We have not attempted to discriminate between his works, but have rather regarded them all as one work, as is the man himself. We have not examined so much as remembered them. To do otherwise would have required a more indifferent, and perhaps even less just review than the present.

All his works might well enough be embraced under the title of one of them, a good specimen brick, "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History." Of this department he is the Chief Professor in the World's University, and even leaves Plutarch behind. Such intimate and living, such loyal and generous sym-

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pathy with the heroes of history, not one in one age only, but forty in forty ages, such an unparalleled reviewing and greeting of all past worth, with exceptions, to be sure, — but exceptions were the rule before, — it was, indeed, to make this the age of review writing, as if now one period of the human story were completing itself, and getting its accounts settled. This soldier has told the stories with new emphasis, and will be a memorable hander-down of fame to posterity. And with what wise discrimination he has selected his men, with reference both to his own genius and to theirs! — Mahomet, Dante, Cromwell, Voltaire, Johnson, Burns, Goethe, Richter, Schiller, Mirabeau, — could any of these have been spared? These we wanted to hear about. We have not, as commonly, the cold and refined judgment of the scholar and critic merely, but something more human and affecting. These eulogies have the glow and warmth of friendship. There is sympathy, not with mere fames, and formless, incredible things, but with kindred men, — not transiently, but lifelong he has walked with them.

No doubt, some of Carlyle's worthies, should they ever return to earth, would find themselves unpleasantly put upon their good behavior, to sustain their characters; but if he can return a man's life more perfect to our hands than it was left at his death, following out the design of its author, we shall have no great cause to complain. We do not want a daguerreotype likeness. All biography is the life of Adam, — a much-experienced man, — and time withdraws something partial from the story of every individual, that

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the historian may supply something general. If these virtues were not in this man, perhaps they are in his biographer, — no fatal mistake. Really, in any other sense, we never do, nor desire to, come at the historical man, — unless we rob his grave, that is the nearest approach. Why did he die, then? *He* is with his bones, surely.

No doubt Carlyle has a propensity to *exaggerate* the heroic in history, that is, he creates you an ideal hero rather than another thing: he has most of that material. This we allow in all its senses, and in one narrower sense it is not so convenient. Yet what were history if he did not exaggerate it? How comes it that history never has to wait for facts, but for a man to write it? The ages may go on forgetting the facts never so long, he can remember two for every one forgotten. The musty records of history, like the catacombs, contain the perishable remains, but only in the breast of genius are embalmed the souls of heroes. There is very little of what is called criticism here; it is love and reverence, rather, which deal with qualities not relatively, but absolutely great; for whatever is admirable in a man is something infinite, to which we cannot set bounds. These sentiments allow the mortal to die, the immortal and divine to survive. There is something antique, even, in his style of treating his subject, reminding us that Heroes and Demi-gods, Fates and Furies, still exist; the common man is nothing to him, but after death the hero is apotheosized and has a place in heaven, as in the religion of the Greeks.

Exaggeration! was ever any virtue attributed to a

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man without exaggeration? was ever any vice, without infinite exaggeration? Do we not exaggerate ourselves to ourselves, or do we recognize ourselves for the actual men we are? Are we not all great men? Yet what are we actually, to speak of? We live by exaggeration. What else is it to anticipate more than we enjoy? The lightning is an exaggeration of the light. Exaggerated history is poetry, and truth referred to a new standard. To a small man every greater is an exaggeration. He who cannot exaggerate is not qualified to utter truth. No truth, we think, was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, so that for the time there seemed to be no other. Moreover, you must speak loud to those who are hard of hearing, and so you acquire a habit of shouting to those who are not. By an immense exaggeration we appreciate our Greek poetry and philosophy, and Egyptian ruins; our Shakespeares and Miltons; our Liberty and Christianity. We give importance to this hour over all other hours. We do not live by justice, but by grace. As the sort of justice which concerns us in our daily intercourse is not that administered by the judge, so the historical justice which we prize is not arrived at by nicely balancing the evidence. In order to appreciate any, even the humblest man, you must first, by some good fortune, have acquired a sentiment of admiration, even of reverence, for him, and there never were such exaggerators as these.

To try him by the German rule of referring an author to his own standard, we will quote the following from Carlyle's remarks on history, and leave the reader to consider how far his practice has been consistent

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with his theory. "Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose history is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it, were the All-wisdom, needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or, at most, in reverent faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal."

Carlyle is a critic who lives in London to tell this generation who have been the great men of our race. We have read that on some exposed place in the city of Geneva, they have fixed a brazen indicator for the use of travelers, with the names of the mountain summits in the horizon marked upon it, "so that by taking sight across the index you can distinguish them at once. You will not mistake Mont Blanc, if you see him, but until you get accustomed to the panorama, you may easily mistake one of his court for the king." It stands there a piece of mute brass, that seems nevertheless to know in what vicinity it is: and there perchance it will stand, when the nation that placed it there has passed away, still in sympathy with the mountains, forever discriminating in the desert.

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So, we may say, stands this man, pointing as long as he lives, in obedience to some spiritual magnetism, to the summits in the historical horizon, for the guidance of his fellows.

Truly, our greatest blessings are very cheap. To have our sunlight without paying for it, without any duty levied, — to have our poet there in England, to furnish us entertainment, and, what is better, provocation, from year to year, all our lives long, to make the world seem richer for us, the age more respectable, and life better worth the living, — all without expense of acknowledgment even, but silently accepted out of the east, like morning light, as a matter of course.

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CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

I HEARTILY accept the motto, "That government is best which governs least;" and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe, — "That government is best which governs not at all;" and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government, — what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people them-

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selves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of india-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

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After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? — in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt

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that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy-Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts, — a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniments, though it may be, —

> "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
> As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
> Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
> O'er the grave where our hero we buried."

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, *posse comitatus*, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others — as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders — serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without *intending* it, as God. A

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very few — as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men* — serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least:—

> "I am too high-born to be propertied,
> To be a secondary at control,
> Or useful serving-man and instrument
> To any sovereign state throughout the world."

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow-men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the

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evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Paley, a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to say that "so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconveniency, it is the will of God . . . that the established government be obeyed, — and no longer. This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself.

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This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does any one think that Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

> "A drab of state, a cloth-o'-silver slut,
> To have her train borne up, and her soul trail in the dirt."

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, coöperate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that

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they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and God-speed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting *for the right* is *doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be be-

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cause they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. *They* will then be the only slaves. Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? Shall we not have the advantage of his wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and despairs of his country, when his country has more reason to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one, thus proving that he is himself *available* for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a *man*, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the population has been returned too large. How many *men* are there to a square thousand miles in this country? Hardly one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow, — one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregarious-

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ness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund for the support of the widows and orphans that may be; who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico; — see if I would go;" and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at naught; as if the state were peniteht to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that degree that it left off sinning for a mo-

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ment. Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, *un*moral, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves, — the union between themselves and the State, — and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they stand in the same relation to the State that the State does to the Union? And have not the same reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union which have prevented them from resisting the State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy *it*? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing that you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see that you are

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never cheated again. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divides States and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy *is* worse than the evil. *It* makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to be on the alert to point out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ, and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offence never contemplated by government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate, penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and deter-

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mined only by the discretion of those who placed him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth, — certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways which the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do *everything*, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconciliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kind-

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ness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year — no more — in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with, — for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel, — and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well what he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he shall treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction

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to his neighborliness without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name, — if ten *honest* men only, — ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State's ambassador, who will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister, — though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her, — the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole,

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and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable, ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her, — the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded? Through this wound a man's real manhood and immor-

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tality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods, — though both will serve the same purpose, — because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man — not to make any invidious comparison — is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the "means" are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavor to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money," said he; — and one took a penny out of his pocket; — if you use money which has the image of Cæsar on it, and which

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he has made current and valuable, that is, *if you are men of the State*, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Cæsar's government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it. "Render therefore to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to God those things which are God's,"—leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax-bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state

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is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame." No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax-bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing: — "Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made

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a like demand on me since; though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find a complete list.

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and *they* were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach

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me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the State never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of *men* being *forced* to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I meet a government which says to me, "Your money or your life," why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.

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The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirt-sleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, "Come, boys, it is time to lock up;" and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer as "a first-rate fellow and a clever man." When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably the neatest apartment in the town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course; and, as the world goes, I believe he was. "Why," said he, "they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it." As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had

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been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of that room; for I found that even here there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of verses which were composed by some young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp.

It was like traveling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town clock strike before, nor the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village inn, — a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

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In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left; but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good-day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison, — for some one interfered, and paid that tax, — I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a tottering and gray-headed man; and yet a change had to my eyes come over the scene, — the town, and State, and country, — greater than any that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are; that in their sacrifices to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls.

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This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the grating of a jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour, — for the horse was soon tackled, — was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.

This is the whole history of "My Prisons."

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow-countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax-bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man or a musket to shoot one with, — the dollar is innocent, — but I am

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concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his action be biased by obstinacy or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, This is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feeling of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming

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brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes

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round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people, to discover a pretext for conformity.

> "We must affect our country as our parents,
> And if at any time we alienate
> Our love or industry from doing it honor,
> We must respect effects and teach the soul
> Matter of conscience and religion,
> And not desire of rule or benefit."

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better a patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable, and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; but seen from a point of view a little higher, they are what I have described them; seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the

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study of these or kindred subjects content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom and eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still, his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given by him but defensive ones. He is

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not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87. "I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which the various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, "Because it was a part of the original compact, — let it stand." Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect, — what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in America to-day with regard to slavery, — but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer as the following, while professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man, — from which what new and singular code of social duties might be inferred? "The manner," says he, "in which the governments of those States where slavery exists are to regulate it is for their own consideration, under their responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me, and they never will." [1]

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at

[1] These extracts have been inserted since the lecture was read.

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it there with reverence and humility; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountain-head.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation?

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to, — for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well, — is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it

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must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

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SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS

I LATELY attended a meeting of the citizens of Concord, expecting, as one among many, to speak on the subject of slavery in Massachusetts; but I was surprised and disappointed to find that what had called my townsmen together was the destiny of Nebraska, and not of Massachusetts, and that what I had to say would be entirely out of order. I had thought that the house was on fire, and not the prairie; but though several of the citizens of Massachusetts are now in prison for attempting to rescue a slave from her own clutches, not one of the speakers at that meeting expressed regret for it, not one even referred to it. It was only the disposition of some wild lands a thousand miles off which appeared to concern them. The inhabitants of Concord are not prepared to stand by one of their own bridges, but talk only of taking up a position on the highlands beyond the Yellowstone River. Our Buttricks and Davises and Hosmers are retreating thither, and I fear that they will leave no Lexington Common between them and the enemy. There is not one slave in Nebraska; there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts.

They who have been bred in the school of politics fail now and always to face the facts. Their measures are half measures and makeshifts merely. They put off the day of settlement indefinitely, and meanwhile the debt accumulates. Though the Fugitive Slave Law

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had not been the subject of discussion on that occasion, it was at length faintly resolved by my townsmen, at an adjourned meeting, as I learn, that the compromise compact of 1820 having been repudiated by one of the parties, "therefore, . . . the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 must be repealed." But this is not the reason why an iniquitous law should be repealed. The fact which the politician faces is merely that there is less honor among thieves than was supposed, and not the fact that they are thieves.

As I had no opportunity to express my thoughts at that meeting, will you allow me to do so here?

Again it happens that the Boston Court-House is full of armed men, holding prisoner and trying a MAN, to find out if he is not really a SLAVE. Does any one think that justice or God awaits Mr. Loring's decision? For him to sit there deciding still, when this question is already decided from eternity to eternity, and the unlettered slave himself and the multitude around have long since heard and assented to the decision, is simply to make himself ridiculous. We may be tempted to ask from whom he received his commission, and who he is that received it; what novel statutes he obeys, and what precedents are to him of authority. Such an arbiter's very existence is an impertinence. We do not ask him to make up his mind, but to make up his pack.

I listen to hear the voice of a Governor, Commander-in-Chief of the forces of Massachusetts. I hear only the creaking of crickets and the hum of insects which now fill the summer air. The Governor's exploit is to review the troops on muster days. I have seen

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him on horseback, with his hat off, listening to a chaplain's prayer. It chances that that is all I have ever seen of a Governor. I think that I could manage to get along without one. If he is not of the least use to prevent my being kidnapped, pray of what important use is he likely to be to me? When freedom is most endangered, he dwells in the deepest obscurity. A distinguished clergyman told me that he chose the profession of a clergyman because it afforded the most leisure for literary pursuits. I would recommend to him the profession of a Governor.

Three years ago, also, when the Sims tragedy was acted, I said to myself, There is such an officer, if not such a man, as the Governor of Massachusetts, — what has he been about the last fortnight? Has he had as much as he could do to keep on the fence during this moral earthquake? It seemed to me that no keener satire could have been aimed at, no more cutting insult have been offered to that man, than just what happened, — the absence of all inquiry after him in that crisis. The worst and the most I chance to know of him is that he did not improve that opportunity to make himself known, and worthily known. He could at least have *resigned* himself into fame. It appeared to be forgotten that there was such a man or such an office. Yet no doubt he was endeavoring to fill the gubernatorial chair all the while. He was no Governor of mine. He did not govern me.

But at last, in the present case, the Governor was heard from. After he and the United States government had perfectly succeeded in robbing a poor inno-

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cent black man of his liberty for life, and, as far as they could, of his Creator's likeness in his breast, he made a speech to his accomplices, at a congratulatory supper!

I have read a recent law of this State, making it penal for any officer of the "Commonwealth" to "detain or aid in the . . . detention," anywhere within its limits, "of any person, for the reason that he is claimed as a fugitive slave." Also, it was a matter of notoriety that a writ of replevin to take the fugitive out of the custody of the United States marshal could not be served for want of sufficient force to aid the officer.

I had thought that the Governor was, in some sense, the executive officer of the State; that it was his business, as a Governor, to see that the laws of the State were executed; while, as a man, he took care that he did not, by so doing, break the laws of humanity; but when there is any special important use for him, he is useless, or worse than useless, and permits the laws of the State to go unexecuted. Perhaps I do not know what are the duties of a Governor; but if to be a Governor requires to subject one's self to so much ignominy without remedy, if it is to put a restraint upon my manhood, I shall take care never to be Governor of Massachusetts. I have not read far in the statutes of this Commonwealth. It is not profitable reading. They do not always say what is true; and they do not always mean what they say. What I am concerned to know is, that that man's influence and authority were on the side of the slaveholder, and not of the slave, — of the guilty, and not of the innocent, — of injustice,

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and not of justice. I never saw him of whom I speak; indeed, I did not know that he was Governor until this event occurred. I heard of him and Anthony Burns at the same time, and thus, undoubtedly, most will hear of him. So far am I from being governed by him. I do not mean that it was anything to his discredit that I had not heard of him, only that I heard what I did. The worst I shall say of him is, that he proved no better than the majority of his constituents would be likely to prove. In my opinion, he was not equal to the occasion.

The whole military force of the State is at the service of a Mr. Suttle, a slaveholder from Virginia, to enable him to catch a man whom he calls his property; but not a soldier is offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped! Is this what all these soldiers, all this *training*, have been for these seventy-nine years past? Have they been trained merely to rob Mexico and carry back fugitive slaves to their masters?

These very nights I heard the sound of a drum in our streets. There were men *training* still; and for what? I could with an effort pardon the cockerels of Concord for crowing still, for they, perchance, had not been beaten that morning; but I could not excuse this rub-a-dub of the "trainers." The slave was carried back by exactly such as these; *i. e.*, by the soldier, of whom the best you can say in this connection is that he is a fool made conspicuous by a painted coat.

Three years ago, also, just a week after the authorities of Boston assembled to carry back a perfectly innocent man, and one whom they knew to be innocent, into

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slavery, the inhabitants of Concord caused the bells to be rung and the cannons to be fired, to celebrate their liberty, — and the courage and love of liberty of their ancestors who fought at the bridge. As if *those* three millions had fought for the right to be free themselves, but to hold in slavery three million others. Nowadays, men wear a fool's cap, and call it a liberty-cap. I do not know but there are some who, if they were tied to a whipping-post, and could but get one hand free, would use it to ring the bells and fire the cannons to celebrate *their* liberty. So some of my townsmen took the liberty to ring and fire. That was the extent of their freedom; and when the sound of the bells died away, their liberty died away also; when the powder was all expended; their liberty went off with the smoke.

The joke could be no broader if the inmates of the prisons were to subscribe for all the powder to be used in such salutes, and hire the jailers to do the firing and ringing for them, while they enjoyed it through the grating.

This is what I thought about my neighbors.

Every humane and intelligent inhabitant of Concord, when he or she heard those bells and those cannons, thought not with pride of the events of the 19th of April, 1775, but with shame of the events of the 12th of April, 1851. But now we have half buried that old shame under a new one.

Massachusetts sat waiting Mr. Loring's decision, as if it could in any way affect her own criminality. Her crime, the most conspicuous and fatal crime of all, was permitting him to be the umpire in such a case.

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It was really the trial of Massachusetts. Every moment that she hesitated to set this man free, every moment that she now hesitates to atone for her crime, she is convicted. The commissioner on her case is God; not Edward G. God, but simple God.

I wish my countrymen to consider that whatever the human law may be, neither an individual nor a nation can ever commit the least act of injustice against the obscurest individual without having to pay the penalty for it. A government which deliberately enacts injustice, and persists in it, will at length even become the laughing-stock of the world.

Much has been said about American slavery, but I think that we do not even yet realize what slavery is. If I were seriously to propose to Congress to make mankind into sausages, I have no doubt that most of the members would smile at my proposition, and if any believed me to be in earnest, they would think that I proposed something much worse than Congress had ever done. But if any of them will tell me that to make a man into a sausage would be much worse — would be any worse — than to make him into a slave, — than it was to enact the Fugitive Slave Law, — I will accuse him of foolishness, of intellectual incapacity, of making a distinction without a difference. The one is just as sensible a proposition as the other.

I hear a good deal said about trampling this law under foot. Why, one need not go out of his way to do that. This law rises not to the level of the head or the reason; its natural habitat is in the dirt. It was born and bred, and has its life, only in the dust and

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mire, on a level with the feet; and he who walks with freedom, and does not with Hindoo mercy avoid treading on every venomous reptile, will inevitably tread on it, and so trample it under foot, — and Webster, its maker, with it, like the dirt-bug and its ball.

Recent events will be valuable as a criticism on the administration of justice in our midst, or, rather, as showing what are the true resources of justice in any community. It has come to this, that the friends of liberty, the friends of the slave, have shuddered when they have understood that his fate was left to the legal tribunals of the country to be decided. Free men have no faith that justice will be awarded in such a case. The judge may decide this way or that; it is a kind of accident, at best. It is evident that he is not a competent authority in so important a case. It is no time, then, to be judging according to his precedents, but to establish a precedent for the future. I would much rather trust to the sentiment of the people. In their vote you would get something of some value, at least, however small; but in the other case, only the trammeled judgment of an individual, of no significance, be it which way it might.

It is to some extent fatal to the courts, when the people are compelled to go behind them. I do not wish to believe that the courts were made for fair weather, and for very civil cases merely; but think of leaving it to any court in the land to decide whether more than three millions of people, in this case a sixth part of a nation, have a right to be freemen or not! But it has been left to the courts of *justice*, so called, — to the

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Supreme Court of the land, — and, as you all know, recognizing no authority but the Constitution, it has decided that the three millions are and shall continue to be slaves. Such judges as these are merely the inspectors of a pick-lock and murderer's tools, to tell him whether they are in working order or not, and there they think that their responsibility ends. There was a prior case on the docket, which they, as judges appointed by God, had no right to skip; which having been justly settled, they would have been saved from this humiliation. It was the case of the murderer himself.

The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order who observe the law when the government breaks it.

Among human beings, the judge whose words seal the fate of a man furthest into eternity is not he who merely pronounces the verdict of the law, but he, whoever he may be, who, from a love of truth, and unprejudiced by any custom or enactment of men, utters a true opinion or *sentence* concerning him. He it is that *sentences* him. Whoever can discern truth has received his commission from a higher source than the chiefest justice in the world who can discern only law. He finds himself constituted judge of the judge. Strange that it should be necessary to state such simple truths!

I am more and more convinced that, with reference to any public question, it is more important to know what the country thinks of it than what the city thinks. The city does not *think* much. On any moral question, I would rather have the opinion of Boxboro than of

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Boston and New York put together. When the former speaks, I feel as if somebody *had* spoken, as if *humanity* was yet, and a reasonable being had asserted its rights, — as if some unprejudiced men among the country's hills had at length turned their attention to the subject, and by a few sensible words redeemed the reputation of the race. When, in some obscure country town, the farmers come together to a special town meeting, to express their opinion on some subject which is vexing the land, that, I think, is the true Congress, and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States.

It is evident that there are, in this Commonwealth at least, two parties, becoming more and more distinct, — the party of the city, and the party of the country. I know that the country is mean enough, but I am glad to believe that there is a slight difference in her favor. But as yet she has few if any organs through which to express herself. The editorials which she reads, like the news, come from the sea-board. Let us, the inhabitants of the country, cultivate self-respect. Let us not send to the city for aught more essential than our broadcloths and groceries; or, if we read the opinions of the city, let us entertain opinions of our own.

Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the press as has already been made, and with effect, on the church. The church has much improved within a few years; but the press is, almost without exception, corrupt. I believe that in this country the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the

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church did in its worst period. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper. At any meeting of politicians, — like that at Concord the other evening, for instance, — how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible ! how pertinent to quote from a newspaper or from the Constitution! The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a Bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail, and thousands of missionaries, are continually dispersing. It is, in short, the only book which America has printed, and which America reads. So wide is its influence. The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent daily, and it costs nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner, as well as my own convictions, when I say, that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country. And as they live and rule only by their servility, and appealing to the worse, and not the better, nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit.

The *Liberator* and the *Commonwealth* were the only papers in Boston, as far as I know, which made themselves heard in condemnation of the cowardice and meanness of the authorities of that city, as exhibited

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in '51. The other journals, almost without exception, by their manner of referring to and speaking of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the carrying back of the slave Sims, insulted the common sense of the country, at least. And, for the most part, they did this, one would say, because they thought so to secure the approbation of their patrons, not being aware that a sounder sentiment prevailed to any extent in the heart of the Commonwealth. I am told that some of them have improved of late; but they are still eminently time-serving. Such is the character they have won.

But, thank fortune, this preacher can be even more easily reached by the weapons of the reformer than could the recreant priest. The free men of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once. One whom I respect told me that he purchased Mitchell's *Citizen* in the cars, and then threw it out the window. But would not his contempt have been more fatally expressed if he had not bought it?

Are they Americans? are they New-Englanders? are they inhabitants of Lexington and Concord and Framingham, who read and support the Boston *Post*, *Mail*, *Journal*, *Advertiser*, *Courier*, and *Times*? Are these the Flags of our Union? I am not a newspaper-reader, and may omit to name the worst.

Could slavery suggest a more complete servility than some of these journals exhibit? Is there any dust which their conduct does not lick, and make fouler still with its slime? I do not know whether the Boston *Herald*

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is still in existence, but I remember to have seen it about the streets when Sims was carried off. Did it not act its part well, — serve its master faithfully! How could it have gone lower on its belly? How can a man stoop lower than he is low? do more than put his extremities in the place of the head he has? than make his head his lower extremity? When I have taken up this paper with my cuffs turned up, I have heard the gurgling of the sewer through every column. I have felt that I was handling a paper picked out of the public gutters, a leaf from the gospel of the gambling-house, the groggery, and the brothel, harmonizing with the gospel of the Merchants' Exchange.

The majority of the men of the North, and of the South and East and West, are not men of principle. If they vote, they do not send men to Congress on errands of humanity; but while their brothers and sisters are being scourged and hung for loving liberty, while — I might here insert all that slavery implies and is — it is the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone and gold which concerns them. Do what you will, O Government, with my wife and children, my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your commands to the letter. It will indeed grieve me if you hurt them, if you deliver them to overseers to be hunted by hounds or to be whipped to death; but, nevertheless, I will peaceably pursue my chosen calling on this fair earth, until perchance, one day, when I have put on mourning for them dead, I shall have persuaded you to relent. Such is the attitude, such are the words of Massachusetts.

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Rather than do thus, I need not say what match I would touch, what system endeavor to blow up; but as I love my life, I would side with the light, and let the dark earth roll from under me, calling my mother and my brother to follow.

I would remind my countrymen that they are to be men first, and Americans only at a late and convenient hour. No matter how valuable law may be to protect your property, even to keep soul and body together, if it do not keep you and humanity together.

I am sorry to say that I doubt if there is a judge in Massachusetts who is prepared to resign his office, and get his living innocently, whenever it is required of him to pass sentence under a law which is merely contrary to the law of God. I am compelled to see that they put themselves, or rather are by character, in this respect, exactly on a level with the marine who discharges his musket in any direction he is ordered to. They are just as much tools, and as little men. Certainly, they are not the more to be respected, because their master enslaves their understandings and consciences, instead of their bodies.

The judges and lawyers, — simply as such, I mean, — and all men of expediency, try this case by a very low and incompetent standard. They consider, not whether the Fugitive Slave Law is right, but whether it is what they call *constitutional*. Is virtue constitutional, or vice? Is equity constitutional, or iniquity? In important moral and vital questions, like this, it is just as impertinent to ask whether a law is constitutional or not, as to ask whether it is profitable or not.

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They persist in being the servants of the worst of men, and not the servants of humanity. The question is, not whether you or your grandfather, seventy years ago, did not enter into an agreement to serve the devil, and that service is not accordingly now due; but whether you will not now, for once and at last, serve God, — in spite of your own past recreancy, or that of your ancestor, — by obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION, which He, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being.

The amount of it is, if the majority vote the devil to be God, the minority will live and behave accordingly, and obey the successful candidate, trusting that, some time or other, by some speaker's casting-vote, perhaps, they may reinstate God. This is the highest principle I can get out or invent for my neighbors. These men act as if they believed that they could safely slide down a hill a little way, — or a good way, — and would surely come to a place, by and by, where they could begin to slide up again. This is expediency, or choosing that course which offers the slightest obstacles to the feet, that is, a down-hill one. But there is no such thing as accomplishing a righteous reform by the use of "expediency." There is no such thing as sliding up-hill. In morals the only sliders are backsliders.

Thus we steadily worship Mammon, both school and state and church, and on the seventh day curse God with a tintamar from one end of the Union to the other.

Will mankind never learn that policy is not morality, — that it never secures any moral right, but con-

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siders merely what is expedient? chooses the available candidate, — who is invariably the devil, — and what right have his constituents to be surprised, because the devil does not behave like an angel of light? What is wanted is men, not of policy, but of probity, — who recognize a higher law than the Constitution, or the decision of the majority. The fate of the country does not depend on how you vote at the polls, — the worst man is as strong as the best at that game; it does not depend on what kind of paper you drop into the ballot-box once a year, but on what kind of man you drop from your chamber into the street every morning.

What should concern Massachusetts is not the Nebraska Bill, nor the Fugitive Slave Bill, but her own slaveholding and servility. Let the State dissolve her union with the slaveholder. She may wriggle and hesitate, and ask leave to read the Constitution once more; but she can find no respectable law or precedent which sanctions the continuance of such a union for an instant.

Let each inhabitant of the State dissolve his union with her, as long as she delays to do her duty.

The events of the past month teach me to distrust Fame. I see that she does not finely discriminate, but coarsely hurrahs. She considers not the simple heroism of an action, but only as it is connected with its apparent consequences. She praises till she is hoarse the easy exploit of the Boston tea-party, but will be comparatively silent about the braver and more disinterestedly heroic attack on the Boston Court-House, simply because it was unsuccessful!

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Covered with disgrace, the State has sat down coolly to try for their lives and liberties the men who attempted to do its duty for it. And this is called *justice!* They who have shown that they can behave particularly well may perchance be put under bonds for *their good behavior*. They whom truth requires at present to plead guilty are, of all the inhabitants of the State, preëminently innocent. While the Governor, and the Mayor, and countless officers of the Commonwealth are at large, the champions of liberty are imprisoned.

Only they are guiltless who commit the crime of contempt of such a court. It behooves every man to see that his influence is on the side of justice, and let the courts make their own characters. My sympathies in this case are wholly with the accused, and wholly against their accusers and judges. Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant. The judge still sits grinding at his organ, but it yields no music, and we hear only the sound of the handle. He believes that all the music resides in the handle, and the crowd toss him their coppers the same as before.

Do you suppose that that Massachusetts which is now doing these things, — which hesitates to crown these men, some of whose lawyers, and even judges, perchance, may be driven to take refuge in some poor quibble, that they may not wholly outrage their instinctive sense of justice, — do you suppose that she is anything but base and servile? that she is the champion of liberty?

Show me a free state, and a court truly of justice, and I will fight for them, if need be; but show me

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Massachusetts, and I refuse her my allegiance, and express contempt for her courts.

The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable; of a bad one, to make it less valuable. We can afford that railroad and all merely material stock should lose some of its value, for that only compels us to live more simply and economically; but suppose that the value of life itself should be diminished! How can we make a less demand on man and nature, how live more economically in respect to virtue and all noble qualities, than we do? I have lived for the last month — and I think that every man in Massachusetts capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have had a similar experience — with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss. I did not know at first what ailed me. At last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country. I had never respected the government near to which I lived, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, minding my private affairs, and forget it. For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent. less since Massachusetts last deliberately sent back an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery. I dwelt before, perhaps, in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between* heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell *wholly within* hell. The site of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with volcanic scoriæ and cinders, such as Milton describes in the infernal regions. If there is any hell

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more unprincipled than our rulers, and we, the ruled, I feel curious to see it. Life itself being worth less, all things with it, which minister to it, are worth less. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls, — a garden laid out around, — and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits, and discover all at once that your villa, with all its contents, is located in hell, and that the justice of the peace has a cloven foot and a forked tail, — do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes?

I feel that, to some extent, the State has fatally interfered with my lawful business. It has not only interrupted me in my passage through Court Street on errands of trade, but it has interrupted me and every man on his onward and upward path, on which he had trusted soon to leave Court Street far behind. What right had it to remind me of Court Street? I have found that hollow which even I had relied on for solid.

I am surprised to see men going about their business as if nothing had happened. I say to myself, "Unfortunates! they have not heard the news." I am surprised that the man whom I just met on horseback should be so earnest to overtake his newly bought cows running away, — since all property is insecure, and if they do not run away again, they may be taken away from him when he gets them. Fool! does he not know that his seed-corn is worth less this year, — that all beneficent harvests fail as you approach the empire of hell? No prudent man will build a stone house under these circumstances, or engage in any peaceful enterprise which it requires a long time to accomplish. Art

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is as long as ever, but life is more interrupted and less available for a man's proper pursuits. It is not an era of repose. We have used up all our inherited freedom. If we would save our lives, we must fight for them.

I walk toward one of our ponds; but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them; when we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are without principle? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her.

But it chanced the other day that I scented a white water-lily, and a season I had waited for had arrived. It is the emblem of purity. It bursts up so pure and fair to the eye, and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of this flower! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of Northern men. It suggests what kind of laws have prevailed longest and widest, and still prevail, and that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such is the odor which the plant emits. If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still young and full of vigor, her integrity and genius unimpaired, and that there is virtue even in man, too, who is fitted to perceive and love it. It feminds me that Nature has been partner to

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no Missouri Compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the water-lily. It is not a *Nymphæa* Douglasii. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts Governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that when we behold or scent a flower, we may not be reminded how inconsistent your deeds are with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality, and if fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man, the decay of humanity; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which are immortal.

Slavery and servility have produced no sweet-scented flower annually, to charm the senses of men, for they have no real life: they are merely a decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils. We do not complain that they *live*, but that they do not *get buried*. Let the living bury them; even they are good for manure.

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A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

I TRUST that you will pardon me for being here. I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you, but I feel forced myself. Little as I know of Captain Brown, I would fain do my part to correct the tone and the statements of the newspapers, and of my countrymen generally, respecting his character and actions. It costs us nothing to be just. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration of, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do.

First, as to his history. I will endeavor to omit, as much as possible, what you have already read. I need not describe his person to you, for probably most of you have seen and will not soon forget him. I am told that his grandfather, John Brown, was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut about the beginning of this century, but early went with his father to Ohio. I heard him say that his father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there, in the War of 1812; that he accompanied him to the camp, and assisted him in that employment, seeing a good deal of military life, — more, perhaps, than if he had been a soldier; for he was often present at the councils of the officers. Especially, he learned by experience how armies are supplied and maintained in the field, — a work which, he observed, requires at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle. He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even

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the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war. He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with a military life; indeed, to excite in him a great abhorrence of it; so much so, that though he was tempted by the offer of some petty office in the army, when he was about eighteen, he not only declined that, but he also refused to train when warned, and was fined for it. He then resolved that he would never have anything to do with any war, unless it were a war for liberty.

When the troubles in Kansas began, he sent several of his sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had; telling them that if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of him, he would follow, to assist them with his hand and counsel. This, as you all know, he soon after did; and it was through his agency, far more than any other's, that Kansas was made free.

For a part of his life he was a surveyor, and at one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and he went to Europe as an agent about that business. There, as everywhere, he had his eyes about him, and made many original observations. He said, for instance, that he saw why the soil of England was so rich, and that of Germany (I think it was) so poor, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry live on the soil which they cultivate, but in Germany they are gathered into villages at night. It is a pity that he did not make a book of his observations.

I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in his

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respect for the Constitution, and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he deemed to be wholly opposed to these, and he was its determined foe.

He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common sense, deliberate and practical as that class is, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at Concord Bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher-principled than any that I have chanced to hear of as there. It was no abolition lecturer that converted him. Ethan Allen and Stark, with whom he may in some respects be compared, were rangers in a lower and less important field. They could bravely face their country's foes, but he had the courage to face his country herself when she was in the wrong. A Western writer says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a "rural exterior;" as if, in that prairie land, a hero should, by good rights, wear a citizen's dress only.

He did not go to the college called Harvard, good old Alma Mater as she is. He was not fed on the pap that is there furnished. As he phrased it, "I know no more of grammar than one of your calves." But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness, and having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the public practice of Humanity in Kansas, as you all know. Such were *his humanities*, and not any study of grammar. He would have left a Greek accent slanting the wrong way, and righted up a falling man.

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He was one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all, — the Puritans. It would be in vain to kill him. He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here. Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England. They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day, and eat parched corn in remembrance of that time. They were neither Democrats nor Republicans, but men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful; not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, nor seeking after available candidates.

"In his camp," as one has recently written, and as I have myself heard him state, "he permitted no profanity; no man of loose morals was suffered to remain there, unless, indeed, as a prisoner of war. 'I would rather,' said he, 'have the small-pox, yellow fever, and cholera, all together in my camp, than a man without principle. . . . It is a mistake, sir, that our people make, when they think that bullies are the best fighters, or that they are the fit men to oppose these Southerners. Give me men of good principles, — God-fearing men, — men who respect themselves, and with a dozen of them I will oppose any hundred such men as these Buford ruffians.'" He said that if one offered himself to be a soldier under him, who was forward to tell what he could or would do if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him.

He was never able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only about a

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dozen, among them his sons, in whom he had perfect faith. When he was here, some years ago, he showed to a few a little manuscript book, — his "orderly book" I think he called it, — containing the names of his company in Kansas, and the rules by which they bound themselves; and he stated that several of them had already sealed the contract with their blood. When some one remarked that, with the addition of a chaplain, it would have been a perfect Cromwellian troop, he observed that he would have been glad to add a chaplain to the list, if he could have found one who could fill that office worthily. It is easy enough to find one for the United States Army. I believe that he had prayers in his camp morning and evening, nevertheless.

He was a man of Spartan habits, and at sixty was scrupulous about his diet at your table, excusing himself by saying that he must eat sparingly and fare hard, as became a soldier, or one who was fitting himself for difficult enterprises, a life of exposure.

A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles, — that was what distinguished him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life. I noticed that he did not overstate anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember, particularly, how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, without ever giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like

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an experienced soldier, keeping a reserve of force and meaning, "They had a perfect right to be hung." He was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents anywhere, had no need to invent anything but to tell the simple truth, and communicate his own resolution; therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress and elsewhere seemed to me at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king.

As for his tact and prudence, I will merely say, that at a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without having his arms taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect guns and other weapons he could collect, openly and slowly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, apparently in the capacity of a surveyor, with his surveying compass exposed in it, and so passed unsuspected, and had ample opportunity to learn the designs of the enemy. For some time after his arrival he still followed the same profession. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic which then occupied their minds, he would, perhaps, take his compass and one of his sons, and proceed to run an imaginary line right through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and when he came up to them, he would naturally pause and have some talk with them, learning their news, and, at last, all their plans perfectly; and having thus completed his real survey he would resume his imaginary one, and run on his line till he was out of sight.

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When I expressed surprise that he could live in Kansas at all, with a price set upon his head, and so large a number, including the authorities, exasperated against him, he accounted for it by saying, "It is perfectly well understood that I will not be taken." Much of the time for some years he has had to skulk in swamps, suffering from poverty, and from sickness which was the consequence of exposure, befriended only by Indians and a few whites. But though it might be known that he was lurking in a particular swamp, his foes commonly did not care to go in after him. He could even come out into a town where there were more Border Ruffians than Free State men, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet not be molested; for, said he, "no little handful of men were willing to undertake it, and a large body could not be got together in season."

As for his recent failure, we do not know the facts about it. It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate attempt. His enemy Mr. Vallandigham is compelled to say that "it was among the best planned and executed conspiracies that ever failed."

Not to mention his other successes, was it a failure, or did it show a want of good management, to deliver from bondage a dozen human beings, and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court-room on his way and telling what he had done, thus convincing Missouri that it was not profitable to try to hold

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slaves in his neighborhood? — and this, not because the government menials were lenient, but because they were afraid of him.

Yet he did not attribute his success, foolishly, to "his star," or to any magic. He said, truly, that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him was, as one of his prisoners confessed, because they *lacked a cause*, — a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked. When the time came, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defense of what they knew to be wrong; they did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

But to make haste to *his* last act, and its effects.

The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps are really ignorant, of the fact that there are at least as many as two or three individuals to a town throughout the North who think much as the present speaker does about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to say that they are an important and growing party. We aspire to be something more than stupid and timid chattels, pretending to read history and our Bibles, but desecrating every house and every day we breathe in. Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned in the late enterprise; but their very anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? They are so anxious because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least a million of the free inhabitants of the United States would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics.

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Though we wear no crape, the thought of that man's position and probable fate is spoiling many a man's day here at the North for other thinking. If any one who has seen him here can pursue successfully any other train of thought, I do not know what he is made of. If there is any such who gets his usual allowance of sleep, I will warrant him to fatten easily under any circumstances which do not touch his body or purse. I put a piece of paper and a pencil under my pillow, and when I could not sleep I wrote in the dark.

On the whole, my respect for my fellow-men, except as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual "pluck," — as the Governor of Virginia is reported to have said, using the language of the cock-pit, "the gamest man he ever saw," — had been caught, and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming of his foes when the governor thought he looked so brave. It turns what sweetness I have to gall, to hear, or hear of, the remarks of some of my neighbors. When we heard at first that he was dead, one of my townsmen observed that "he died as the fool dieth;" which, pardon me, for an instant suggested a likeness in him dying to my neighbor living. Others, craven-hearted, said disparagingly, that "he threw his life away," because he resisted the government. Which way have they thrown *their* lives, pray? — such as would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. I hear another ask, Yankee-like, "What

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will he gain by it?" as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise. Such a one has no idea of gain but in this worldly sense. If it does not lead to a "surprise" party, if he does not get a new pair of boots, or a vote of thanks, it must be a failure. "But he won't gain anything by it." Well, no, I don't suppose he could get four-and-sixpence a day for being hung, take the year round; but then he stands a chance to save a considerable part of his soul, — and *such* a soul! — when *you* do not. No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.

Such do not know that like the seed is the fruit, and that, in the moral world, when good seed is planted, good fruit is inevitable, and does not depend on our watering and cultivating; that when you plant, or bury, a hero in his field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up. This is a seed of such force and vitality, that it does not ask our leave to germinate.

The momentary charge at Balaklava, in obedience to a blundering command, proving what a perfect machine the soldier is, has, properly enough, been celebrated by a poet laureate; but the steady, and for the most part successful, charge of this man, for some years, against the legions of Slavery, in obedience to an infinitely higher command, is as much more memorable than that as an intelligent and conscientious man is superior to a machine. Do you think that that will go unsung?

"Served him right," — "A dangerous man," — "He is undoubtedly insane." So they proceed to live their

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sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little, but chiefly pausing at that feat of Putnam, who was let down into a wolf's den; and in this wise they nourish themselves for brave and patriotic deeds some time or other. The Tract Society could afford to print that story of Putnam. You might open the district schools with the reading of it, for there is nothing about Slavery or the Church in it; unless it occurs to the reader that some pastors are *wolves* in sheep's clothing. "The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," even, might dare to protest against *that* wolf. I have heard of boards, and of American boards, but it chances that I never heard of this particular lumber till lately. And yet I hear of Northern men, and women, and children, by families, buying a "life-membership" in such societies as these. A life-membership in the grave! You can get buried cheaper than that.

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. There is hardly a house but is divided against itself, for our foe is the all but universal woodenness of both head and heart, the want of vitality in man, which is the effect of our vice; and hence are begotten fear, superstition, bigotry, persecution, and slavery of all kinds. We are mere figure-heads upon a hulk, with livers in the place of hearts. The curse is the worship of idols, which at length changes the worshiper into a stone image himself; and the New-Englander is just as much an idolater as the Hindoo. This man was an exception, for he did not set up even a political graven image between him and his God.

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A church that can never have done with excommunicating Christ while it exists! Away with your broad and flat churches, and your narrow and tall churches! Take a step forward, and invent a new style of outhouses. Invent a salt that will save you, and defend our nostrils.

The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he is forever looking forward to the time when he shall go to his "*long* rest." He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does not wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he does n't wish to have any supplementary articles added to the contract, to fit it to the present time. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week. The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a stagnation of spirit. Many, no doubt, are well disposed, but sluggish by constitution and by habit, and they cannot conceive of a man who is actuated by higher motives than they are. Accordingly they pronounce this man insane, for they know that *they* could never act as he does, as long as they are themselves.

We dream of foreign countries, of other times and races of men, placing them at a distance in history or space; but let some significant event like the present occur in our midst, and we discover, often, this distance and this strangeness between us and our nearest neighbors. *They* are our Austrias, and Chinas, and

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South Sea Islands. Our crowded society becomes well spaced all at once, clean and handsome to the eye, — a city of magnificent distances. We discover why it was that we never got beyond compliments and surfaces with them before; we become aware of as many versts between us and them as there are between a wandering Tartar and a Chinese town. The thoughtful man becomes a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place. Impassable seas suddenly find their level between us, or dumb steppes stretch themselves out there. It is the difference of constitution, of intelligence, and faith, and not streams and mountains, that make the true and impassable boundaries between individuals and between states. None but the like-minded can come plenipotentiary to our court.

I read all the newspapers I could get within a week after this event, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men. I have since seen one noble statement, in a Boston paper, not editorial. Some voluminous sheets decided not to print the full report of Brown's words to the exclusion of other matter. It was as if a publisher should reject the manuscript of the New Testament, and print Wilson's last speech. The same journal which contained this pregnant news was chiefly filled, in parallel columns, with the reports of the political conventions that were being held. But the descent to them was too steep. They should have been spared this contrast, — been printed in an extra, at least. To turn from the voices and deeds of earnest men to the *cackling* of political conventions! Office-seekers and speech-makers, who

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do not so much as lay an honest egg, but wear their breasts bare upon an egg of chalk! Their great game is the game of straws, or rather that universal aboriginal game of the platter, at which the Indians cried *hub, bub!* Exclude the reports of religious and political conventions, and publish the words of a living man.

But I object not so much to what they have omitted as to what they have inserted. Even the *Liberator* called it "a misguided, wild, and apparently insane — effort." As for the herd of newspapers and magazines, I do not chance to know an editor in the country who will deliberately print anything which he knows will ultimately and permanently reduce the number of his subscribers. They do not believe that it would be expedient. How then can they print truth? If we do not say pleasant things, they argue, nobody will attend to us. And so they do like some traveling auctioneers, who sing an obscene song, in order to draw a crowd around them. Republican editors, obliged to get their sentences ready for the morning edition, and accustomed to look at everything by the twilight of politics, express no admiration, nor true sorrow even, but call these men "deluded fanatics," — "mistaken men," — "insane," or "crazed." It suggests what a *sane* set of editors we are blessed with, *not* "mistaken men;" who know very well on which side their bread is buttered, at least.

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring, "I did n't do it, nor countenance *him* to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't be fairly inferred from my past career." I, for one, am not interested to hear you de-

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fine your position. I don't know that I ever was or ever shall be. I think it is mere egotism, or impertinent at this time. Ye need n't take so much pains to wash your skirts of him. No intelligent man will ever be convinced that he was any creature of yours. He went and came, as he himself informs us, "under the auspices of John Brown and nobody else." The Republican Party does not perceive how many his *failure* will make to vote more correctly than they would have them. They have counted the votes of Pennsylvania & Co., but they have not correctly counted Captain Brown's vote. He has taken the wind out of their sails, — the little wind they had, — and they may as well lie to and repair.

What though he did not belong to your clique! Though you may not approve of his method or his principles, recognize his magnanimity. Would you not like to claim kindredship with him in that, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you? Do you think that you would lose your reputation so? What you lost at the spile, you would gain at the bung.

If they do not mean all this, then they do not speak the truth, and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

"It was always conceded to him," *says one who calls him crazy*, "that he was a conscientious man, very modest in his demeanor, apparently inoffensive, until the subject of Slavery was introduced, when he would exhibit a feeling of indignation unparalleled."

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying victims; new cargoes are being added in mid-ocean; a

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small crew of slaveholders, countenanced by a large body of passengers, is smothering four millions under the hatches, and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained is by "the quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity," without any "outbreak." As if the sentiments of humanity were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds, and you could disperse them, all finished to order, the pure article, as easily as water with a watering-pot, and so lay the dust. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead that have found deliverance. That is the way we are "diffusing" humanity, and its sentiments with it.

Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted "on the principle of revenge." They do not know the man. They must enlarge themselves to conceive of him. I have no doubt that the time will come when they will begin to see him as he was. They have got to conceive of a man of faith and of religious principle, and not a politician or an Indian; of a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed.

If Walker may be considered the representative of the South, I wish I could say that Brown was the representative of the North. He was a superior man. He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things. He did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them as he was bid. For once we are lifted out of the trivialness and dust of politics into the re-

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gion of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature, knowing himself for a man, and the equal of any and all governments. In that sense he was the most American of us all. He needed no babbling lawyer, making false issues, to defend him. He was more than a match for all the judges that American voters, or office-holders of whatever grade, can create. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist. When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally *by a whole body*, — even though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself, — the spectacle is a sublime one, — did n't ye know it, ye *Liberators*, ye *Tribunes*, ye *Republicans?* — and we become criminal in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him. He needs none of your respect.

As for the Democratic journals, they are not human enough to affect me at all. I do not feel indignation at anything they may say.

I am aware that I anticipate a little, — that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes; but that being the case, I have all along found myself thinking and speaking of him as physically dead.

I do not believe in erecting statues to those who still live in our hearts, whose bones have not yet crumbled in the earth around us, but I would rather see the statue of Captain Brown in the Massachusetts State-House yard than that of any other man whom I know. I rejoice that I live in this age, that I am his contemporary.

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What a contrast, when we turn to that political party which is so anxiously shuffling him and his plot out of its way, and looking around for some available slaveholder, perhaps, to be its candidate, at least for one who will execute the Fugitive Slave Law, and all those other unjust laws which he took up arms to annul!

Insane! A father and six sons, and one son-in-law, and several more men besides, — as many at least as twelve disciples, — all struck with insanity at once; while the sane tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors, his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Just as insane were his efforts in Kansas. Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane? Do the thousands who know him best, who have rejoiced at his deeds in Kansas, and have afforded him material aid there, think him insane? Such a use of this word is a mere trope with most who persist in using it, and I have no doubt that many of the rest have already in silence retracted their words.

Read his admirable answers to Mason and others. How they are dwarfed and defeated by the contrast! On the one side, half-brutish, half-timid questioning; on the other, truth, clear as lightning, crashing into their obscene temples. They are made to stand with Pilate, and Gessler, and the Inquisition. How ineffectual their speech and action! and what a void their silence! They are but helpless tools in this great work. It was no human power that gathered them about this preacher.

What have Massachusetts and the North sent a few *sane* representatives to Congress for, of late years? —

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to declare with effect what kind of sentiments? All their speeches put together and boiled down — and probably they themselves will confess it — do not match for manly directness and force, and for simple truth, the few casual remarks of crazy John Brown on the floor of the Harper's Ferry engine-house, — that man whom you are about to hang, to send to the other world, though not to represent *you* there. No, he was not our representative in any sense. He was too fair a specimen of a man to represent the like of us. Who, then, *were* his constituents? If you read his words understandingly you will find out. In his case there is no idle eloquence, no made, nor maiden speech, no compliments to the oppressor. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness the polisher of his sentences. He could afford to lose his Sharp's rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, — a Sharp's rifle of infinitely surer and longer range.

And the New York *Herald* reports the conversation *verbatim!* It does not know of what undying words it is made the vehicle.

I have no respect for the penetration of any man who can read the report of that conversation and still call the principal in it insane. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secure. Take any sentence of it, — "Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will; not otherwise. So far as I am myself concerned, I have told everything truthfully. I value my word, sir." The few who talk about his vindictive spirit, while they really admire his heroism, have no

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test by which to detect a noble man, no amalgam to combine with his pure gold. They mix their own dross with it.

It is a relief to turn from these slanders to the testimony of his more truthful, but frightened jailers and hangmen. Governor Wise speaks far more justly and appreciatingly of him than any Northern editor, or politician, or public personage, that I chance to have heard from. I know that you can afford to hear him again on this subject. He says: "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. . . . He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners. . . . And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous" (I leave that part to Mr. Wise), "but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, are like him. . . . Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could. Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stevens, and Coppoc, it was hard to say which was most firm."

Almost the first Northern men whom the slaveholder has learned to respect!

The testimony of Mr. Vallandigham, though less valuable, is of the same purport, that "it is vain to underrate either the man or his conspiracy. . . . He is the

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farthest possible removed from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic, or madman."

"All is quiet at Harper's Ferry," say the journals. What is the character of that calm which follows when the law and the slaveholder prevail? I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out, with glaring distinctness, the character of this government. We needed to be thus assisted to see it by the light of history. It needed to see itself. When a government puts forth its strength on the side of injustice, as ours to maintain slavery and kill the liberators of the slave, it reveals itself a merely brute force, or worse, a demoniacal force. It is the head of the Plug-Uglies. It is more manifest than ever that tyranny rules. I see this government to be effectually allied with France and Austria in oppressing mankind. There sits a tyrant holding fettered four millions of slaves; here comes their heroic liberator. This most hypocritical and diabolical government looks up from its seat on the gasping four millions, and inquires with an assumption of innocence: "What do you assault me for? Am I not an honest man? Cease agitation on this subject, or I will make a slave of you, too, or else hang you."

We talk about a *representative* government; but what a monster of a government is that where the noblest faculties of the mind, and the *whole* heart, are not *represented!* A semihuman tiger or ox, stalking over the earth, with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away. Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by such a government as that.

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The only government that I recognize — and it matters not how few are at the head of it, or how small its army — is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice. What shall we think of a government to which all the truly brave and just men in the land are enemies, standing between it and those whom it oppresses? A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Treason! Where does such treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought? High treason, when it is resistance to tyranny here below, has its origin in, and is first committed by, the power that makes and forever re-creates man. When you have caught and hung all these human rebels, you have accomplished nothing but your own guilt, for you have not struck at the fountain-head. You presume to contend with a foe against whom West Point cadets and rifled cannon *point* not. Can all the art of the cannon-founder tempt matter to turn against its maker? Is the form in which the founder thinks he casts it more essential than the constitution of it and of him-self?

The United States have a coffle of four millions of slaves. They are determined to keep them in this condition; and Massachusetts is one of the confederated overseers to prevent their escape. Such are not all the inhabitants of Massachusetts, but such are they who rule and are obeyed here. It was Massachusetts, as well as Virginia, that put down this insurrection at

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Harper's Ferry. She sent the marines there, and she will have *to pay the penalty of her sin.*

Suppose that there is a society in this State that out of its own purse and magnanimity saves all the fugitive slaves that run to us, and protects our colored fellow-citizens, and leaves the other work to the government, so called. Is not that government fast losing its occupation, and becoming contemptible to mankind? If private men are obliged to perform the offices of government, to protect the weak and dispense justice, then the government becomes only a hired man, or clerk, to perform menial or indifferent services. Of course, that is but the shadow of a government whose existence necessitates a Vigilant Committee. What should we think of the Oriental Cadi even, behind whom worked in secret a Vigilant Committee? But such is the character of our Northern States generally; each has its Vigilant Committee. And, to a certain extent, these crazy governments recognize and accept this relation. They say, virtually, "We 'll be glad to work for you on these terms, only don't make a noise about it." And thus the government, its salary being insured, withdraws into the back shop, taking the Constitution with it, and bestows most of its labor on repairing that. When I hear it at work sometimes, as I go by, it reminds me, at best, of those farmers who in winter contrive to turn a penny by following the coopering business. And what kind of spirit is their barrel made to hold? They speculate in stocks, and bore holes in mountains, but they are not competent to lay out even a decent highway. The only *free* road, the Underground

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Railroad, is owned and managed by the Vigilant Committee. *They* have tunneled under the whole breadth of the land. Such a government is losing its power and respectability as surely as water runs out of a leaky vessel, and is held by one that can contain it.

I hear many condemn these men because they were so few. When were the good and the brave ever in a majority? Would you have had him wait till that time came? — till you and I came over to him? The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was a picked man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions; apparently a man of principle, of rare courage, and devoted humanity; ready to sacrifice his life at any moment for the benefit of his fellow-man. It may be doubted if there were as many more their equals in these respects in all the country, — I speak of his followers only, — for their leader, no doubt, scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung: That was the greatest compliment which this country could pay them. They were ripe for her gallows. She has tried a long time, she has hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

When I think of him, and his six sons, and his son-in-law, not to enumerate the others, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, for

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months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, — I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. If he had had any journal advocating "*his cause*," any organ, as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing the same old tune, and then passing round the hat, it would have been fatal to his efficiency. If he had acted in any way so as to be let alone by the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all the reformers of the day that I know.

It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him. They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others. Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death. I shall not be forward to think him mistaken in his method who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave. I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of Captain Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me. At any rate, I do not think it is quite sane for one to spend his whole life in talking or writing about this matter, unless he is continuously inspired, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to. I do not wish to kill nor to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both these things would

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be by me unavoidable. We preserve the so-called peace of our community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of *this* provisional army. So we defend ourselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery. I know that the mass of my countrymen think that the only righteous use that can be made of Sharp's rifles and revolvers is to fight duels with them, when we are insulted by other nations, or to hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them, or the like. I think that for once the Sharp's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them.

The same indignation that is said to have cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it. No man has appeared in America, as yet, who loved his fellow-man so well, and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him. He took up his life and he laid it down for him. What sort of violence is that which is encouraged, not by soldiers, but by peaceable citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the Gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by the Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as by Quaker women?

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death, — the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America before; for in order to die you must first have lived. I don't believe

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in the hearses, and palls, and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life; they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple's veil was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. Let the dead bury their dead. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. Franklin, — Washington, — they were let off without dying; they were merely missing one day. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die; or that they have died, for aught that I know. Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They haven't got life enough in them. They'll deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. Do you think that you are going to die, sir? No! there's no hope of you. You haven't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school. We make a needless ado about capital punishment, — taking lives, when there is no life to take. *Memento mori!* We don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. We've interpreted it in a groveling and sniveling sense; we've wholly forgotten how to die.

But be sure you do die nevertheless. Do your work, and finish it. If you know how to begin, you will know when to end.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man's acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words that do. It is

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the best news that America has ever heard. It has already quickened the feeble pulse of the North, and infused more and more generous blood into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

One writer says that Brown's peculiar monomania made him to be "dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being." Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded. He is just that thing. He shows himself superior to nature. He has a spark of divinity in him.

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

Newspaper editors argue also that it is a proof of his *insanity* that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did, — that he did not suspect himself for a moment! They talk as if it were impossible that a man could be "divinely appointed" in these days to do any work whatever; as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man's daily work; as if the agent to abolish slavery could only be somebody appointed by the President, or by some political party. They talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success.

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and

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fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder.

The amount of it is, our "*leading men*" are a harmless kind of folk, and they know *well enough* that *they* were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party.

Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? Is there no resource but to cast this man also to the Minotaur? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly. While these things are being done, beauty stands veiled and music is a screeching lie. Think of him, — of his rare qualities! — such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand; no mock hero, nor the representative of any party. A man such as the sun may not rise upon again in this benighted land. To whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant; sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity; and the only use to which you can put him is to hang him at the end of a rope! You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the saviour of four millions of men.

Any man knows when he is justified, and all the wits in the world cannot enlighten him on that point. The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step towards its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply be-

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cause they were made? or declared by any number of men to be good, if they are *not* good? Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which his better nature disapproves? Is it the intention of law-makers that *good* men shall be hung ever? Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit? What right have *you* to enter into a compact with yourself that you *will* do thus or so, against the light within you? Is it for *you* to *make up* your mind, — to form any resolution whatever, — and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which ever pass your understanding? I do not believe in lawyers, in that mode of attacking or defending a man, because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not. Let lawyers decide trivial cases. Business men may arrange that among themselves. If they were the interpreters of the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing. A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in a free! What kind of laws for free men can you expect from that?

I am here to plead his cause with you. I plead not for his life, but for his character, — his immortal life; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and is not his in the least. Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer; he is an angel of light.

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I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. I *almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if *any* life, can do as much good as his death.

"Misguided!" "Garrulous!" "Insane!" "Vindictive!" So ye write in your easy-chairs, and thus he wounded responds from the floor of the armory, clear as a cloudless sky, true as the voice of nature is: "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker. I acknowledge no master in human form."

And in what a sweet and noble strain he proceeds, addressing his captors, who stand over him: "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity, and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you, so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage."

And, referring to his movement: "It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to God."

"I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God."

You don't know your testament when you see it.

"I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave power, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful."

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"I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better, all you people at the South, prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled, — this negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet."

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, no longer going to Rome for a subject; the poet will sing it; the historian record it; and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the Declaration of Independence, it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when at least the present form of slavery shall be no more here. We shall then be at liberty to weep for Captain Brown. Then, and not till then, we will take our revenge.

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THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN BROWN

JOHN BROWN'S career for the last six weeks of his life was meteor-like, flashing through the darkness in which we live. I know of nothing so miraculous in our history.

If any person, in a lecture or conversation at that time, cited any ancient example of heroism, such as Cato or Tell or Winkelried, passing over the recent deeds and words of Brown, it was felt by any intelligent audience of Northern men to be tame and inexcusably far-fetched.

For my own part, I commonly attend more to nature than to man, but any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects. I was so absorbed in him as to be surprised whenever I detected the routine of the natural world surviving still, or met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the "little dipper" should be still diving quietly in the river, as of yore; and it suggested that this bird might continue to dive here when Concord should be no more.

I felt that he, a prisoner in the midst of his enemies and under sentence of death, if consulted as to his next step or resource, could answer more wisely than all his countrymen beside. He best understood his position; he contemplated it most calmly. Comparatively, all other men, North and South, were beside themselves. Our thoughts could not revert to any greater

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or wiser or better man with whom to contrast him, for he, then and there, was above them all. The man this country was about to hang appeared the greatest and best in it.

Years were not required for a revolution of public opinion; days, nay hours, produced marked changes in this case. Fifty who were ready to say, on going into our meeting in honor of him in Concord, that he ought to be hung, would not say it when they came out. They heard his words read; they saw the earnest faces of the congregation; and perhaps they joined at last in singing the hymn in his praise.

The order of instructors was reversed. I heard that one preacher, who at first was shocked and stood aloof, felt obliged at last, after he was hung, to make him the subject of a sermon, in which, to some extent, he eulogized the man, but said that his act was a failure. An influential class-teacher thought it necessary, after the services, to tell his grown-up pupils that at first he thought as the preacher did then, but now he thought that John Brown was right. But it was understood that his pupils were as much ahead of the teacher as he was ahead of the priest; and I know for a certainty that very little boys at home had already asked their parents, in a tone of surprise, why God did not interfere to save him. In each case, the constituted teachers were only half conscious that they were not *leading*, but being *dragged*, with some loss of time and power.

The more conscientious preachers, the Bible men, they who talk about principle, and doing to others as you would that they should do unto you, — how could

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they fail to recognize him, by far the greatest preacher of them all, with the Bible in his life and in his acts, the embodiment of principle, who actually carried out the golden rule? All whose moral sense had been aroused, who had a calling from on high to preach, sided with him. What confessions he extracted from the cold and conservative! It is remarkable, but on the whole it is well, that it did not prove the occasion for a new sect of *Brownites* being formed in our midst.

They, whether within the Church or out of it, who adhere to the spirit and let go the letter, and are accordingly called infidel, were as usual foremost to recognize him. Men have been hung in the South before for attempting to rescue slaves, and the North was not much stirred by it. Whence, then, this wonderful difference? We were not so sure of *their* devotion to principle. We made a subtle distinction, forgot human laws, and did homage to an idea. The North, I mean the *living* North, was suddenly all transcendental. It went behind the human law, it went behind the apparent failure, and recognized eternal justice and glory. Commonly, men live according to a formula, and are satisfied if the order of law is observed, but in this instance they, to some extent, returned to original perceptions, and there was a slight revival of old religion. They saw that what was called order was confusion, what was called justice, injustice, and that the best was deemed the worst. This attitude suggested a more intelligent and generous spirit than that which actuated our forefathers, and the possibility, in the course of ages, of a revolution in behalf of another and an oppressed people.

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Most Northern men, and a few Southern ones, were wonderfully stirred by Brown's behavior and words. They saw and felt that they were heroic and noble, and that there had been nothing quite equal to them in their kind in this country, or in the recent history of the world. But the minority were unmoved by them. They were only surprised and provoked by the attitude of their neighbors. They saw that Brown was brave, and that he believed that he had done right, but they did not detect any further peculiarity in him. Not being accustomed to make fine distinctions, or to appreciate magnanimity, they read his letters and speeches as if they read them not. They were not aware when they approached a heroic statement, — they did not know when they *burned*. They did not feel that he spoke with authority, and hence they only remembered that the *law* must be executed. They remembered the old formula, but did not hear the new revelation. The man who does not recognize in Brown's words a wisdom and nobleness, and therefore an authority, superior to our laws, is a modern Democrat. This is the test by which to discover him. He is not willfully but constitutionally blind on this side, and he is consistent with himself. Such has been his past life; no doubt of it. In like manner he has read history and his Bible, and he accepts, or seems to accept, the last only as an established formula, and not because he has been convicted by it. You will not find kindred sentiments in his commonplace-book, if he has one.

When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it? They who are noble themselves. I was not

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surprised that certain of my neighbors spoke of John Brown as an ordinary felon, for who are they? They have either much flesh, or much office, or much coarseness of some kind. They are not ethereal natures in any sense. The dark qualities predominate in them. Several of them are decidedly pachydermatous. I say it in sorrow, not in anger. How can a man behold the light who has no answering inward light? They are true to their *sight*, but when they look this way they *see* nothing, they are blind. For the children of the light to contend with them is as if there should be a contest between eagles and owls. Show me a man who feels bitterly toward John Brown, and let me hear what noble verse he can repeat. He 'll be as dumb as if his lips were stone.

It is not every man who can be a Christian, even in a very moderate sense, whatever education you give him. It is a matter of constitution and temperament, after all. He may have to be born again many times. I have known many a man who pretended to be a Christian, in whom it was ridiculous, for he had no genius for it. It is not every man who can be a free man, even.

Editors persevered for a good while in saying that Brown was crazy; but at last they said only that it was "a crazy scheme," and the only evidence brought to prove it was that it cost him his life. I have no doubt that if he had gone with five thousand men, liberated a thousand slaves, killed a hundred or two slaveholders, and had as many more killed on his own side, but not lost his own life, these same editors would have called

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it by a more respectable name. Yet he has been far more successful than that. He has liberated many thousands of slaves, both North and South. They seem to have known nothing about living or dying for a principle. They all called him crazy then; who calls him crazy now?

All through the excitement occasioned by his remarkable attempt and subsequent behavior the Massachusetts legislature, not taking any steps for the defense of her citizens who were likely to be carried to Virginia as witnesses and exposed to the violence of a slaveholding mob, was wholly absorbed in a liquor-agency question, and indulging in poor jokes on the word "extension." Bad spirits occupied their thoughts. I am sure that no statesman up to the occasion could have attended to that question at all at that time, — a very vulgar question to attend to at any time!

When I looked into a liturgy of the Church of England, printed near the end of the last century, in order to find a service applicable to the case of Brown, I found that the only martyr recognized and provided for by it was King Charles the First, an eminent scamp. Of all the inhabitants of England and of the world, he was the only one, according to this authority, whom that church had made a martyr and saint of; and for more than a century it had celebrated his martyrdom, so called, by an annual service. What a satire on the Church is that!

Look not to legislatures and churches for your guidance, nor to any soulless *incorporated* bodies, but to *inspirited* or inspired ones.

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What avail all your scholarly accomplishments and learning, compared with wisdom and manhood? To omit his other behavior, see what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man wrote within six weeks. Where is our professor of *belles-lettres*, or of logic and rhetoric, who can write so well? He wrote in prison, not a History of the World, like Raleigh, but an American book which I think will live longer than that. I do not know of such words, uttered under such circumstances, and so copiously withal, in Roman or English or any history. What a variety of themes he touched on in that short space! There are words in that letter to his wife, respecting the education of his daughters, which deserve to be framed and hung over every mantelpiece in the land. Compare this earnest wisdom with that of Poor Richard.

The death of Irving, which at any other time would have attracted universal attention, having occurred while these things were transpiring, went almost unobserved. I shall have to read of it in the biography of authors.

Literary gentlemen, editors, and critics think that they know how to write, because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but they are egregiously mistaken. The *art* of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them. This unlettered man's speaking and writing are standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American; such as "*It will pay.*" It suggests that the one great rule of com-

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position — and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this — is, to *speak the truth*. This first, this second, this third; pebbles in your mouth or not. This demands earnestness and manhood chiefly.

We seem to have forgotten that the expression "a *liberal* education" originally meant among the Romans one worthy of *free* men; while the learning of trades and professions by which to get your livelihood merely was considered worthy of *slaves* only. But taking a hint from the word, I would go a step further, and say that it is not the man of wealth and leisure simply, though devoted to art, or science, or literature, who, in a true sense, is *liberally* educated, but only the earnest and *free* man. In a slaveholding country like this, there can be no such thing as a *liberal* education tolerated by the State; and those scholars of Austria and France who, however learned they may be, are contented under their tyrannies have received only a *servile* education.

Nothing could his enemies do but it redounded to his infinite advantage, — that is, to the advantage of his cause. They did not hang him at once, but reserved him to preach to them. And then there was another great blunder. They did not hang his four followers with him; that scene was still postponed; and so his victory was prolonged and completed. No theatrical manager could have arranged things so wisely to give effect to his behavior and words. And who, think you, *was* the manager? *Who* placed the slave-woman and her child, whom he stooped to kiss for a symbol, between his prison and the gallows?

We soon saw, as he saw, that he was not to be par-

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doned or rescued by men. That would have been to disarm him, to restore to him a material weapon, a Sharp's rifle, when he had taken up the sword of the spirit, — the sword with which he has really won his greatest and most memorable victories. Now he has not laid aside the sword of the spirit, for he is pure spirit himself, and his sword is pure spirit also.

> "He nothing common did or mean
> Upon that memorable scene, . . .
> Nor called the gods with vulgar spite,
> To vindicate his helpless right;
> But bowed his comely head
> Down, as upon a bed."

What a transit was that of his horizontal body alone, but just cut down from the gallows-tree! We read that at such a time it passed through Philadelphia, and by Saturday night had reached New York. Thus like a meteor it shot through the Union from the Southern regions toward the North! No such freight had the cars borne since they carried him southward alive.

On the day of his translation, I heard, to be sure, that he was *hung*, but I did not know what that meant; I felt no sorrow on that account; but not for a day or two did I even *hear* that he was *dead*, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who *had not died*. I never hear of a man named Brown now, — and I hear of them pretty often, — I never hear of any particularly brave and earnest man, but my first thought is of John Brown, and what relation he may be to him. I meet

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him at every turn. He is more alive than ever he was. He has earned immortality. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public, and in the clearest light that shines on this land.

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AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN BROWN

At the services held in Concord, Massachusetts, December 2, 1859, in commemoration of John Brown, executed that day, Mr. Thoreau said:] So universal and widely related is any transcendent moral greatness, and so nearly identical with greatness everywhere and in every age, — as a pyramid contracts the nearer you approach its apex, — that, when I now look over my commonplace-book of poetry, I find that the best of it is oftenest applicable, in part or wholly, to the case of Captain Brown. Only what is true, and strong, and solemnly earnest will recommend itself to our mood at this time. Almost any noble verse may be read, either as his elegy or eulogy, or be made the text of an oration on him. Indeed, such are now discovered to be the parts of a universal liturgy, applicable to those rare cases of heroes and martyrs for which the ritual of no church has provided. This is the formula established on high, — their burial service, — to which every great genius has contributed its stanza or line. As Marvell wrote: —

> "When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
> And fear has coward churchmen silenced,
> Then is the poet's time; 't is then he draws,
> And single fights forsaken virtue's cause;
> He, when the wheel of empire whirleth back,
> And though the world's disjointed axle crack,
> Sings still of ancient rights and better times,
> Seeks suffering good, arraigns successful crimes."

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The sense of grand poetry, read by the light of this event, is brought out distinctly like an invisible writing held to the fire: —

> "All heads must come
> To the cold tomb, —
> Only the actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

We have heard that the Boston lady who recently visited our hero in prison found him wearing still the clothes, all cut and torn by sabres and by bayonet-thrusts, in which he had been taken prisoner; and thus he had gone to his trial; and without a hat. She spent her time in prison mending those clothes, and, for a memento, brought home a pin covered with blood.

What are the clothes that endure?

> "The garments lasting evermore
> Are works of mercy to the poor;
> And neither tetter, time, nor moth
> Shall fray that silk or fret this cloth."

The well-known verses called "The Soul's Errand," supposed, by some, to have been written by Sir Walter Raleigh when he was expecting to be executed the following day, are at least worthy of such an origin, and are equally applicable to the present case. [Mr. Thoreau then read these verses, as well as a number of poetical passages selected by another citizen of Concord, and closed with the following translation from Tacitus made by himself.]

"You, Agricola, are fortunate, not only because your life was glorious, but because your death was timely. As they tell us who heard your last words, unchanged

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and willing you accepted your fate; as if, as far as in your power, you would make the emperor appear innocent. But, besides the bitterness of having lost a parent, it adds to our grief, that it was not permitted us to minister to your health, . . . to gaze on your countenance, and receive your last embrace; surely, we might have caught some words and commands which we could have treasured in the inmost part of our souls. This is our pain, this our wound. . . . You were buried with the fewer tears, and in your last earthly light your eyes looked around for something which they did not see.

"If there is any abode for the spirits of the pious, if, as wise men suppose, great souls are not extinguished with the body, may you rest placidly, and call your family from weak regrets and womanly laments to the contemplation of your virtues, which must not be lamented, either silently or aloud. Let us honor you by our admiration rather than by short-lived praises, and, if nature aid us, by our emulation of you. That is true honor, that the piety of whoever is most akin to you. This also I would teach your family, so to venerate your memory as to call to mind all your actions and words, and embrace your character and the form of your soul rather than of your body; not because I think that statues which are made of marble or brass are to be condemned, but as the features of men, so images of the features are frail and perishable. The form of the soul is eternal; and this we can retain and express, not by a foreign material and art, but by our own lives. Whatever of Agricola we have loved, whatever we have admired,

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remains, and will remain, in the minds of men and the records of history, through the eternity of ages. For oblivion will overtake many of the ancients, as if they were inglorious and ignoble: Agricola, described and transmitted to posterity, will survive."

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LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE

At a lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficies. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what *I thought*, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land, — since I am a surveyor, — or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere, — for I have had a little experience in that business, — that there is a desire to hear what *I think* on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country, — and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I

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resolve, accordingly, that I will give them a strong dose of myself. They have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that they shall have me, though I bore them beyond all precedent.

So now I would say something similar to you, my readers. Since *you* are my readers, and I have not been much of a traveler, I will not talk about people a thousand miles off, but come as near home as I can. As the time is short, I will leave out all the flattery, and retain all the criticism.

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the fields, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. If a man was tossed out of a window when an infant, and so made a cripple for life, or scared out of his wits by the Indians, it is regretted chiefly because he was thus incapacitated for — business! I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business.

There is a coarse and boisterous money-making fellow in the outskirts of our town, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes me to spend

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three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perhaps get some more money to hoard, and leave for his heirs to spend foolishly. If I do this, most will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but if I choose to devote myself to certain labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they may be inclined to look on me as an idler. Nevertheless, as I do not need the police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in this fellow's undertaking any more than in many an enterprise of our own or foreign governments, however amusing it may be to him or them, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!

Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now. For instance: just after sunrise, one summer morning, I noticed one of my neighbors walking beside his team, which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone swung under the axle, surrounded by an atmosphere of industry, — his day's work begun, — his brow commenced to sweat, — a reproach to all sluggards and idlers, — pausing abreast the shoulders of his oxen,

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and half turning round with a flourish of his merciful whip, while they gained their length on him. And I thought, Such is the labor which the American Congress exists to protect, — honest, manly toil, — honest as the day is long, — that makes his bread taste sweet, and keeps society sweet, — which all men respect and have consecrated; one of the sacred band, doing the needful but irksome drudgery. Indeed, I felt a slight reproach, because I observed this from a window, and was not abroad and stirring about a similar business. The day went by, and at evening I passed the yard of another neighbor, who keeps many servants, and spends much money foolishly, while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw the stone of the morning lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's premises, and the dignity forthwith departed from the teamster's labor, in my eyes. In my opinion, the sun was made to light worthier toil than this. I may add that his employer has since run off, in debt to a good part of the town, and, after passing through Chancery, has settled somewhere else, there to become once more a patron of the arts.

The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money *merely* is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly. Those services which the community will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to

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render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The state does not commonly reward a genius any more wisely. Even the poet laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty. He must be bribed with a pipe of wine; and perhaps another poet is called away from his muse to gauge that very pipe. As for my own business, even that kind of surveying which I could do with most satisfaction my employers do not want. They would prefer that I should do my work coarsely and not too well, ay, not well enough. When I observe that there are different ways of surveying, my employer commonly asks which will give him the most land, not which is most correct. I once invented a rule for measuring cord-wood, and tried to introduce it in Boston; but the measurer there told me that the sellers did not wish to have their wood measured correctly, — that he was already too accurate for them, and therefore they commonly got their wood measured in Charlestown before crossing the bridge.

The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get "a good job," but to perform well a certain work; and, even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.

It is remarkable that there are few men so well employed, so much to their minds, but that a little money or fame would commonly buy them off from their pre-

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sent pursuit. I see advertisements for *active* young men, as if activity were the whole of a young man's capital. Yet I have been surprised when one has with confidence proposed to me, a grown man, to embark in some enterprise of his, as if I had absolutely nothing to do, my life having been a complete failure hitherto. What a doubtful compliment this to pay me! As if he had met me half-way across the ocean beating up against the wind, but bound nowhere, and proposed to me to go along with him! If I did, what do you think the underwriters would say? No, no! I am not without employment at this stage of the voyage. To tell the truth, I saw an advertisement for able-bodied seamen, when I was a boy, sauntering in my native port, and as soon as I came of age I embarked.

The community has no bribe that will tempt a wise man. You may raise money enough to tunnel a mountain, but you cannot raise money enough to hire a man who is minding *his own* business. An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not. The inefficient offer their inefficiency to the highest bidder, and are forever expecting to be put into office. One would suppose that they were rarely disappointed.

Perhaps I am more than usually jealous with respect to my freedom. I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood, and by which it is allowed that I am to some extent serviceable to my contemporaries, are as yet commonly a pleasure to me, and I am not often reminded that they

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are a necessity. So far I am successful. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased, the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery. If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing-mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes. You must get your living by loving. But as it is said of the merchants that ninety-seven in a hundred fail, so the life of men generally, tried by this standard, is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied.

Merely to come into the world the heir of a fortune is not to be born, but to be still-born, rather. To be supported by the charity of friends, or a government pension, — provided you continue to breathe, — by whatever fine synonyms you describe these relations, is to go into the almshouse. On Sundays the poor debtor goes to church to take an account of stock, and finds, of course, that his outgoes have been greater than his income. In the Catholic Church, especially, they go into chancery, make a clean confession, give up all, and think to start again. Thus men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up.

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As for the comparative demand which men make on life, it is an important difference between two, that the one is satisfied with a level success, that his marks can all be hit by point-blank shots, but the other, however low and unsuccessful his life may be, constantly elevates his aim, though at a very slight angle to the horizon. I should much rather be the last man, — though, as the Orientals say, "Greatness doth not approach him who is forever looking down; and all those who are looking high are growing poor."

It is remarkable that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if *getting* a living is not so, then living is not. One would think, from looking at literature, that this question had never disturbed a solitary individual's musings. Is it that men are too much disgusted with their experience to speak of it? The lesson of value which money teaches, which the Author of the Universe has taken so much pains to teach us, we are inclined to skip altogether. As for the means of living, it is wonderful how indifferent men of all classes are about it, even reformers, so called, — whether they inherit, or earn, or steal it. I think that Society has done nothing for us in this respect, or at least has undone what she has done. Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off.

The title *wise* is, for the most part, falsely applied. How can one be a wise man, if he does not know any

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better how to live than other men? — if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a tread-mill? or does she teach how to succeed *by her example?* Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? It is pertinent to ask if Plato got his *living* in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries, — or did he succumb to the difficulties of life like other men? Did he seem to prevail over some of them merely by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live, because his aunt remembered him in her will? The ways in which most men get their living, that is, live, are mere makeshifts, and a shirking of the real business of life, — chiefly because they do not know, but partly because they do not mean, any better.

The rush to California, for instance, and the attitude, not merely of merchants, but of philosophers and prophets, so called, in relation to it, reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to live by luck, and so get the means of commanding the labor of others less lucky, without contributing any value to society! And that is called enterprise! I know of no more startling development of the immorality of trade, and all the common modes of getting a living. The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball. The hog that gets his living by rooting, stirring up the soil so, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay *such* a price for it. Even Mahomet knew that

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God did not make this world in jest. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. The world's raffle! A subsistence in the domains of Nature a thing to be raffled for! What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be, that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And have all the precepts in all the Bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the human race only an improved muck-rake? Is this the ground on which Orientals and Occidentals meet? Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted, — and He would, perchance, reward us with lumps of gold?

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former. It is one of the most extensive systems of counterfeiting that the world has seen. I did not know that mankind was suffering for want of gold. I have seen a little of it. I know that it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of gold will gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom.

The gold-digger in the ravines of the mountains is as much a gambler as his fellow in the saloons of San Francisco. What difference does it make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win, society is the loser. The gold-digger is the enemy of the honest laborer, whatever checks and compensations there may be. It is not enough to tell me that you worked hard

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to get your gold. So does the Devil work hard. The way of transgressors may be hard in many respects. The humblest observer who goes to the mines sees and says that gold-digging is of the character of a lottery; the gold thus obtained is not the same thing with the wages of honest toil. But, practically, he forgets what he has seen, for he has seen only the fact, not the principle, and goes into trade there, that is, buys a ticket in what commonly proves another lottery, where the fact is not so obvious.

After reading Howitt's account of the Australian gold-diggings one evening, I had in my mind's eye, all night, the numerous valleys, with their streams, all cut up with foul pits, from ten to one hundred feet deep, and half a dozen feet across, as close as they can be dug, and partly filled with water, — the locality to which men furiously rush to probe for their fortunes, — uncertain where they shall break ground, — not knowing but the gold is under their camp itself, — sometimes digging one hundred and sixty feet before they strike the vein, or then missing it by a foot, — turned into demons, and regardless of each others' rights, in their thirst for riches, — whole valleys, for thirty miles, suddenly honeycombed by the pits of the miners, so that even hundreds are drowned in them, — standing in water, and covered with mud and clay, they work night and day, dying of exposure and disease. Having read this, and partly forgotten it, I was thinking, accidentally, of my own unsatisfactory life, doing as others do; and with that vision of the diggings still before me, I asked myself why *I* might not be washing some gold

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daily, though it were only the finest particles, — why *I* might not sink a shaft down to the gold within me, and work that mine. *There* is a Ballarat, a Bendigo for you, — what though it were a sulky-gully? At any rate, I might pursue some path, however solitary and narrow and crooked, in which I could walk with love and reverence. Wherever a man separates from the multitude, and goes his own way in this mood, there indeed is a fork in the road, though ordinary travelers may see only a gap in the paling. His solitary path across lots will turn out the *higher way* of the two.

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it lies. They go prospecting farther and farther away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when they think themselves most successful. Is not our *native* soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? and has not this for more than geologic ages been bringing down the shining particles and forming the nuggets for us? Yet, strange to tell, if a digger steal away, prospecting for this true gold, into the unexplored solitudes around us, there is no danger that any will dog his steps, and endeavor to supplant him. He may claim and undermine the whole valley even, both the cultivated and the uncultivated portions, his whole life long in peace, for no one will ever dispute his claim. They will not mind his cradles or his toms. He is not confined to a claim twelve feet square, as at Ballarat, but may mine anywhere, and wash the whole wide world in his tom.

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Howitt says of the man who found the great nugget which weighed twenty-eight pounds, at the Bendigo diggings in Australia: "He soon began to drink; got a horse, and rode all about, generally at full gallop, and, when he met people, called out to inquire if they knew who he was, and then kindly informed them that he was 'the bloody wretch that had found the nugget.' At last he rode full speed against a tree, and nearly knocked his brains out." I think, however, there was no danger of that, for he had already knocked his brains out against the nugget. Howitt adds, "He is a hopelessly ruined man." But he is a type of the class. They are all fast men. Hear some of the names of the places where they dig: "Jackass Flat," — "Sheep's-Head Gully," — "Murderer's Bar," etc. Is there no satire in these names? Let them carry their ill-gotten wealth where they will, I am thinking it will still be "Jackass Flat," if not "Murderer's Bar," where they live.

The last resource of our energy has been the robbing of graveyards on the Isthmus of Darien, an enterprise which appears to be but in its infancy; for, according to late accounts, an act has passed its second reading in the legislature of New Granada, regulating this kind of mining; and a correspondent of the "Tribune" writes: "In the dry season, when the weather will permit of the country being properly prospected, no doubt other rich *guacas* [that is, graveyards] will be found." To emigrants he says: "Do not come before December; take the Isthmus route in preference to the Boca del Toro one; bring no useless baggage, and do

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not cumber yourself with a tent; but a good pair of blankets will be necessary; a pick, shovel, and axe of good material will be almost all that is required:" advice which might have been taken from the "Burker's Guide." And he concludes with this line in Italics and small capitals: "*If you are doing well at home*, STAY THERE," which may fairly be interpreted to mean, "If you are getting a good living by robbing graveyards at home, stay there."

But why go to California for a text? She is the child of New England, bred at her own school and church.

It is remarkable that among all the preachers there are so few moral teachers. The prophets are employed in excusing the ways of men. Most reverend seniors, the *illuminati* of the age, tell me, with a gracious, reminiscent smile, betwixt an aspiration and a shudder, not to be too tender about these things, — to lump all that, that is, make a lump of gold of it. The highest advice I have heard on these subjects was groveling. The burden of it was, — It is not worth your while to undertake to reform the world in this particular. Do not ask how your bread is buttered; it will make you sick, if you do, — and the like. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread. If within the sophisticated man there is not an unsophisticated one, then he is but one of the devil's angels. As we grow old, we live more coarsely, we relax a little in our disciplines, and, to some extent, cease to obey our finest instincts. But we should be fastidious to the extreme of sanity, disregarding the gibes of those who are more unfortunate than ourselves.

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In our science and philosophy, even, there is commonly no true and absolute account of things. The spirit of sect and bigotry has planted its hoof amid the stars. You have only to discuss the problem, whether the stars are inhabited or not, in order to discover it. Why must we daub the heavens as well as the earth? It was an unfortunate discovery that Dr. Kane was a Mason, and that Sir John Franklin was another. But it was a more cruel suggestion that possibly that was the reason why the former went in search of the latter. There is not a popular magazine in this country that would dare to print a child's thought on important subjects without comment. It must be submitted to the D.D.'s. I would it were the chickadee-dees.

You come from attending the funeral of mankind to attend to a natural phenomenon. A little thought is sexton to all the world.

I hardly know an *intellectual* man, even, who is so broad and truly liberal that you can think aloud in his society. Most with whom you endeavor to talk soon come to a stand against some institution in which they appear to hold stock, — that is, some particular, not universal, way of viewing things. They will continually thrust their own low roof, with its narrow skylight, between you and the sky, when it is the unobstructed heavens you would view. Get out of the way with your cobwebs; wash your windows, I say! In some lyceums they tell me that they have voted to exclude the subject of religion. But how do I know what their religion is, and when I am near to or far from it? I have walked into such an arena and done my best to make a

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clean breast of what religion I have experienced, and the audience never suspected what I was about. The lecture was as harmless as moonshine to them. Whereas, if I had read to them the biography of the greatest scamps in history, they might have thought that I had written the lives of the deacons of their church. Ordinarily, the inquiry is, Where did you come from? or, Where are you going? That was a more pertinent question which I overheard one of my auditors put to another once, — "What does he lecture for?" It made me quake in my shoes.

To speak impartially, the best men that I know are not serene, a world in themselves. For the most part, they dwell in forms, and flatter and study effect only more finely than the rest. We select granite for the underpinning of our houses and barns; we build fences of stone; but we do not ourselves rest on an underpinning of granitic truth, the lowest primitive rock. Our sills are rotten. What stuff is the man made of who is not coexistent in our thought with the purest and subtilest truth? I often accuse my finest acquaintances of an immense frivolity; for, while there are manners and compliments we do not meet, we do not teach one another the lessons of honesty and sincerity that the brutes do, or of steadiness and solidity that the rocks do. The fault is commonly mutual, however; for we do not habitually demand any more of each other.

That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was! — only another kind of politics or dancing. Men were making speeches to him all over the country, but each expressed only the

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thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stood on truth. They were merely banded together, as usual one leaning on another, and all together on nothing; as the Hindoos made the world rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, and had nothing to put under the serpent. For all fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat.

Just so hollow and ineffectual, for the most part, is our ordinary conversation. Surface meets surface. When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. We rarely meet a man who can tell us any news which he has not read in a newspaper, or been told by his neighbor; and, for the most part, the only difference between us and our fellow is that he has seen the newspaper, or been out to tea, and we have not. In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence, has not heard from himself this long while.

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper a week. I have tried it recently, and for so long it seems to me that I have not dwelt in my native region. The sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters. It requires more than a day's devotion to know and to possess the wealth of a day.

We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I do not know why my news should be so trivial, — considering what one's dreams

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and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news we hear, for the most part, is not news to our genius. It is the stalest repetition. You are often tempted to ask why such stress is laid on a particular experience which you have had, — that, after twenty-five years, you should meet Hobbins, Registrar of Deeds, again on the sidewalk. Have you not budged an inch, then? Such is the daily news. Its facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi, and impinge on some neglected *thallus*, or surface of our minds, which affords a basis for them, and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Of what consequence, though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion? In health we have not the least curiosity about such events. We do not live for idle amusement. I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up.

All summer, and far into the autumn, perchance, you unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now you find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to you. Your walks were full of incidents. You attended, not to the affairs of Europe, but to your own affairs in Massachusetts fields. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events that make the news transpire, — thinner than the paper on which it is printed, — then these things will fill the world for you; but if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them. Really to see the sun rise or go down every day, so to relate our-

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selves to a universal fact, would preserve us sane forever. Nations! What are nations? Tartars, and Huns, and Chinamen! Like insects, they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men. It is individuals that populate the world. Any man thinking may say with the Spirit of Lodin, —

> "I look down from my height on nations,
> And they become ashes before me; —
> Calm is my dwelling in the clouds;
> Pleasant are the great fields of my rest."

Pray, let us live without being drawn by dogs, Esquimaux-fashion, tearing over hill and dale, and biting each other's ears.

Not without a slight shudder at the danger, I often perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of some trivial affair, — the news of the street; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish, — to permit idle rumors and incidents of the most insignificant kind to intrude on ground which should be sacred to thought. Shall the mind be a public arena, where the affairs of the street and the gossip of the tea-table chiefly are discussed? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself, — an hypæthral temple, consecrated to the service of the gods? I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my attention with those which are insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in

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this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into our thoughts, to stalk profanely through their very *sanctum sanctorum* for an hour, ay, for many hours! to make a very barroom of the mind's inmost apartment, as if for so long the dust of the street had occupied us, — the very street itself, with all its travel, its bustle, and filth, had passed through our thoughts' shrine! Would it not be an intellectual and moral suicide? When I have been compelled to sit spectator and auditor in a court-room for some hours, and have seen my neighbors, who were not compelled, stealing in from time to time, and tiptoeing about with washed hands and faces, it has appeared to my mind's eye, that, when they took off their hats, their ears suddenly expanded into vast hoppers for sound, between which even their narrow heads were crowded. Like the vanes of windmills, they caught the broad but shallow stream of sound, which, after a few titillating gyrations in their coggy brains, passed out the other side. I wondered if, when they got home, they were as careful to wash their ears as before their hands and faces. It has seemed to me, at such a time, that the auditors and the witnesses, the jury and the counsel, the judge and the criminal at the bar, — if I may presume him guilty before he is convicted, — were all equally criminal, and a thunderbolt might be expected to descend and consume them all together.

By all kinds of traps and signboards, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, exclude such trespassers from the only ground which can be sacred to you. It is so hard to forget what it is worse than use-

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less to remember! If I am to be a thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain brooks, the Parnassian streams, and not the town sewers. There is inspiration, that gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven. There is the profane and stale revelation of the barroom and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the hearer determines to which it shall be open, and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be permanently profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. Our very intellect shall be macadamized, as it were, — its foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over; and if you would know what will make the most durable pavement, surpassing rolled stones, spruce blocks, and asphaltum, you have only to look into some of our minds which have been subjected to this treatment so long.

If we have thus desecrated ourselves, — as who has not? — the remedy will be by wariness and devotion to reconsecrate ourselves, and make once more a fane of the mind. We should treat our minds, that is, ourselves, as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times. Read the Eternities. Conventionalities are at length as bad as impurities. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Knowledge does not

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come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven. Yes, every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them, — had better let their peddling-carts be driven, even at the slowest trot or walk, over that bridge of glorious span by which we trust to pass at last from the farthest brink of time to the nearest shore of eternity! Have we no culture, no refinement, — but skill only to live coarsely and serve the Devil? — to acquire a little worldly wealth, or fame, or liberty, and make a false show with it, as if we were all husk and shell, with no tender and living kernel to us? Shall our institutions be like those chestnut burs which contain abortive nuts, perfect only to prick the fingers?

America is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought; but surely it cannot be freedom in a merely political sense that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from a political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant. Now that the republic — the *res-publica* — has been settled, it is time to look after the *res-privata*, — the private state, — to see, as the Roman senate charged its consuls, "*ne quid res*-PRIVATA *detrimenti caperet*," that the *private* state receive no detriment.

Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George and continue the slaves of King Prejudice? What is it to be born free and not to live

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free? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves, or a freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outmost defenses only of freedom. It is our children's children who may perchance be really free. We tax ourselves unjustly. There is a part of us which is not represented. It is taxation without representation. We quarter troops, we quarter fools and cattle of all sorts upon ourselves. We quarter our gross bodies on our poor souls, till the former eat up all the latter's substance.

With respect to a true culture and manhood, we are essentially provincial still, not metropolitan, — mere Jonathans. We are provincial, because we do not find at home our standards; because we do not worship truth, but the reflection of truth; because we are warped and narrowed by an exclusive devotion to trade and commerce and manufactures and agriculture and the like, which are but means, and not the end.

So is the English Parliament provincial. Mere country bumpkins, they betray themselves, when any more important question arises for them to settle, the Irish question, for instance, — the English question why did I not say? Their natures are subdued to what they work in. Their "good breeding" respects only secondary objects. The finest manners in the world are awkwardness and fatuity when contrasted with a finer intelligence. They appear but as the fashions of past days, — mere courtliness, knee-buckles and small-clothes, out of date. It is the vice, but not the excellence

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of manners, that they are continually being deserted by the character; they are cast-off clothes or shells, claiming the respect which belonged to the living creature. You are presented with the shells instead of the meat, and it is no excuse generally, that, in the case of some fishes, the shells are of more worth than the meat. The man who thrusts his manners upon me does as if he were to insist on introducing me to his cabinet of curiosities, when I wished to see himself. It was not in this sense that the poet Decker called Christ "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." I repeat that in this sense the most splendid court in Christendom is provincial, having authority to consult about Transalpine interests only, and not the affairs of Rome. A prætor or proconsul would suffice to settle the questions which absorb the attention of the English Parliament and the American Congress.

Government and legislation! these I thought were respectable professions. We have heard of heaven-born Numas, Lycurguses, and Solons, in the history of the world, whose *names* at least may stand for ideal legislators; but think of legislating to *regulate* the breeding of slaves, or the exportation of tobacco! What have divine legislators to do with the exportation or the importation of tobacco? what humane ones with the breeding of slaves? Suppose you were to submit the question to any son of God, — and has He no children in the Nineteenth Century? is it a family which is extinct? — in what condition would you get it again? What shall a State like Virginia say for itself at the last day, in which these have been the principal, the staple produc-

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tions? What ground is there for patriotism in such a State? I derive my facts from statistical tables which the States themselves have published.

A commerce that whitens every sea in quest of nuts and raisins, and makes slaves of its sailors for this purpose! I saw, the other day, a vessel which had been wrecked, and many lives lost, and her cargo of rags, juniper berries, and bitter almonds were strewn along the shore. It seemed hardly worth the while to tempt the dangers of the sea between Leghorn and New York for the sake of a cargo of juniper berries and bitter almonds. America sending to the Old World for her bitters! Is not the sea-brine, is not shipwreck, bitter enough to make the cup of life go down here? Yet such, to a great extent, is our boasted commerce; and there are those who style themselves statesmen and philosophers who are so blind as to think that progress and civilization depend on precisely this kind of interchange and activity, — the activity of flies about a molasses-hogshead. Very well, observes one, if men were oysters. And very well, answer I, if men were mosquitoes.

Lieutenant Herndon, whom our government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of slavery, observed that there was wanting there "an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country." But what are the "artificial wants" to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite

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and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are "the great resources of a country" that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out "the great resources" of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, — those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

In short, as a snow-drift is formed where there is a lull in the wind, so, one would say, where there is a lull of truth, an institution springs up. But the truth blows right on over it, nevertheless, and at length blows it down.

What is called politics is comparatively something so superficial and inhuman, that practically I have never fairly recognized that it concerns me at all. The newspapers, I perceive, devote some of their columns specially to politics or government without charge; and this, one would say, is all that saves it; but as I love literature and to some extent the truth also, I never read those columns at any rate. I do not wish to blunt my sense of right so much. I have not got to answer for having read a single President's Message. A strange age of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to a private man's door, and utter their complaints at his elbow! I cannot take up a

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newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it, — more importunate than an Italian beggar; and if I have a mind to look at its certificate, made, perchance, by some benevolent merchant's clerk, or the skipper that brought it over, for it cannot speak a word of English itself, I shall probably read of the eruption of some Vesuvius, or the overflowing of some Po, true or forged, which brought it into this condition. I do not hesitate, in such a case, to suggest work, or the almshouse; or why not keep its castle in silence, as I do commonly? The poor President, what with preserving his popularity and doing his duty, is completely bewildered. The newspapers are the ruling power. Any other government is reduced to a few marines at Fort Independence. If a man neglects to read the Daily Times, government will go down on its knees to him, for this is the only treason in these days.

Those things which now most engage the attention of men, as politics and the daily routine, are, it is true, vital functions of human society, but should be unconsciously performed, like the corresponding functions of the physical body. They are *infra*-human, a kind of vegetation. I sometimes awake to a half-consciousness of them going on about me, as a man may become conscious of some of the processes of digestion in a morbid state, and so have the dyspepsia, as it is called. It is as if a thinker submitted himself to be rasped by the great gizzard of creation. Politics is, as it were, the gizzard of society, full of grit and gravel, and the two

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political parties are its two opposite halves, — sometimes split into quarters, it may be, which grind on each other. Not only individuals, but states, have thus a confirmed dyspepsia, which expresses itself, you can imagine by what sort of eloquence. Thus our life is not altogether a forgetting, but also, alas! to a great extent, a remembering, of that which we should never have been conscious of, certainly not in our waking hours. Why should we not meet, not always as dyspeptics, to tell our bad dreams, but sometimes as *eu*peptics, to congratulate each other on the ever-glorious morning? I do not make an exorbitant demand, surely.

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INDEX

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INDEX

Abolitionist journal, an, 306–310.
ACROSS THE CAPE, 129–149.
AFTER THE DEATH OF JOHN BROWN, 451–454.
Agriculture, the new, 291.
Alphonse, Jean, quoted, 238.
America, not truly free, 476, 477; provincialism of, 477.
Anchors, dragging for, 162.
Animals, man's duty to the lower, 283–286.
Apple trees, Cape Cod, 32–34.
Archer, Gabriel, quoted, 244.
Architecture, American, 28, 29; the new, 293.
Australia, gold-hunters in, 465, 466.
Autumn landscape near Provincetown, 193–195.
Axy, a Bible name, 95.

Bank swallow, the, 164.
Barber's Historical Collections, quoted, 222.
Barnstable (Mass.), 22.
Bascom, Rev. Jonathan, 55.
Bathing, sea, 16, 17.
Bayberry, the, 102, 103.
BEACH, THE, 57–78.
BEACH AGAIN, THE, 102–128.
Beaches, Cape Cod the best of Atlantic, 269–271.
Beach-grass, 200, 201, 204–209.
Bees, the keeping of, 284, 285.
Bellamy, the pirate, wrecked off Wellfleet, 160, 161.
Beverley, Robert, History of Virginia, quoted, 15, 102, 103.
Billingsgate, part of Wellfleet called, 82.
Billingsgate Island, 89.
Birds on Cape Cod, 113, 114, 131, 164.
Blackfish, 142–147.
Borde, Sieur de la, quoted, 156.
Boston, a big wharf, 268; newspapers of, 398–400.
Boys, Provincetown, 218.
Brave man and the coward, the, 277–279.
Breakers, 58, 209.
Brereton, John, quoted, 245.
Brewster (Mass.), 22, 28, 29.
Bridgewater (Mass.), 19.
Brook Island in Cohasset, 4.
Brown, John, the truth about, 409; the Kansas troubles, 410, 413–416; occupation, descent, and character, 410–414; newspaper opinions of, 416–425; absurdly called insane, 426–428; small following of, 432; example of death of, 434, 435; feeling of divine appointment, 436, 437; why guilty of death, 437; quoted, 439, 440; last days of, 441–450; effect of the words of, 444; editors' opinions of, 445; not dead, 449, 450; T.'s speech in Concord after the death of, 451–454.
Browne, Sir Thomas, quoted, 157, 158.
Buckland, Francis T., Curiosities of Natural History, 84.
Burns, Anthony, 405.

Cabot, the discoveries of, 232, 233.
California, the rush to, 463–465.
Cambria, the steamer, aground, 93.
Camp-meetings, Eastham, 46–48; *versus* Ocean, 67.
Cape Cod, T.'s various visits to, 3; derivation of name of, 4; formation of, 4, 20; barrenness of, 36–38; the real, 65; houses, 80; landscape, a, 132–137; men, the Norse quality of, 140; western shore of, 142; changes in the coast-line of, 151–155; clothesyard, a, 220; and its harbors, various names for, 226–229; Gosnold's discovery of, 242–247; people, 257, 258.
"Cape Cod Railroad," the, 19.
CARLYLE, THOMAS, AND HIS WORKS, 316–355.
Carlyle, Thomas, circumstances of

Digitized by Google

his life, 316–320; his books, 320–322; not a German or mystic, 322–325; English style of, 324–333; quoted, upon Richter, 331, 338; humor of, 333–337; as critic and looker-on, 339–343; not blithe enough for a poet, 115, 116; sympathy with the Reformer class, 344–346; compared with Emerson, 345; a philosopher of action, 346–349; objections to, 349; a typical specimen from, on Heroes, 350–352; his exaggeration, 352–354; quoted, on the writing of history, 354; pointing to the summits of humanity, 355.
Champlain, quoted, 85; records and maps of, 227–233.
Charity, cold, 78.
Charles I, the only martyr in Church of England liturgy, 446.
Chatham (Mass.), 26.
Christian, the modern, 420; being a, 445.
Church of England, prayer for a martyr, 446.
Cigar-smoke, the gods not to be appeased with, 42.
Cities as wharves, 268.
City and country opinions, 396, 397.
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, 356–387.
Clams, Cape Cod, 35, 36; large, 72; or quahogs, catching birds, 86; stones shaped like, 109.
Clay Pounds, the, 132; why so called, 158; the Somerset wrecked on, 162.
Cohasset (Mass.), the wreck at, 5–13; rocks, sea-bathing at, 16, 17.
Concord (Mass.), the *trainers* of, 392.
Conversation, the shallowness of most, 471.
Corn, great crops of, 37–39.
Country and city opinions, 396, 397.
Cows fed on fishes' heads, 214, 215.
Cranks, the turning of, 297.
Crantz, account of Greenland, quoted, 60, 149.

Darien, Isthmus of, robbing graveyards on the, 467.
Darwin, Charles, quoted, 122.
D. D.'s and chickadee-dees, 469.
Dead body on the shore, a, 107, 108.
De Monts, Champlain and, 228.
Dennis (Mass.), 22; described, 25, 26.
Doane, Heman, verses by, on Thomas Prince's pear tree, 44, 45.
Doane, John, 45.
Dog, at the churn, 285.
Dogs on the seashore, 185, 186.
Douglass, Frederick, Wendell Phillips on, 313.
Driftwood, Cape Cod and Greenland, 59–61.
Dwight, Timothy, quoted, 212, 225.
Dying, real, 434, 435.

East Harbor Village, in Truro, 137.
Eastham (Mass.), the history of, 43–56; ministers of, 45–55; Table-Lands of, 62; the Pilgrims, 256.
Emerson, R. W., Carlyle compared with, 345, 346.
Etzler, J. H., review of The Paradise within the Reach of all Men, 280–305; quoted, 280, 281, 292–300; "Mechanical System," 286, 292, 300, 303; merits and faults of the book, 301–304.
Exaggeration, the need of, 352, 353.

Fame, to be distrusted, 403.
Fences in Truro, 138, 139.
"Fish, A Religious," newspaper clipping, 116; uses of, in Provincetown, 212–215.
Fish stories, ancient, 215, 216.
Fishes driven ashore by storm, 143–147.
Fishing, for bass, 117; mackerel, 179–184, 189, 190.
Flat, the weak person, 278.
Fox, starting up a, 148.
Fragrance, of flowers and political life, 408.
Franklin, wreck of the ship, 73; wreckage from the, 92, 114, 115.
Freedom, of one's time, 460, 461.
French, coin found on beach at Wellfleet, 161; explorers in and about New England, 227–242.
Fruit trees, paucity of, in Cape towns, 34.
Fugitive Slave Law, the, 388, 389, 401–403, 426.
"*Furdustrandas*," 187, 191.

Galway, Ireland, the wrecked brig from, 6.

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Gazetteer, the, 25, 28.
Gerard, the English herbalist, quoted, 206.
Gilbert, Sir Humphrey, 123.
Gilpin, William, quoted, 119.
Gold craze, California and Australia, 463–467.
Gosnold, Captain Bartholomew, 4; discovery of Cape Cod by, 242–247.
Government, the best, 356; the American, 356–360; resistance to, 360–362, 365–381; T. and the, 381–387; good and bad, 405; a representative, 429; the small business of, 478–480.
Governor, a Massachusetts, 389, 390.
Grampus Rock, in Cohasset, 7, 9.
Graveyard, a Cape Cod, 148.
Greenland, driftwood in, 60.
Gulls, methods of catching, 71, 72.

Hell, living in Massachusetts or, 405, 406.
Herald of Freedom, 306–310.
Herring River, 80.
Highland Light, The, 150–175.
Highland Light, 132, 150; description and stories of, 167–175.
Hog Island, inside of Hull, 15.
Horses, men's work for, 286.
Howitt, William, 465; quoted on Australian gold-diggings, 467.
Hull (Mass.), 15.
Humane Society, huts of the, 63, 74–78.
Humboldt, Alexander von, quoted, 121.
Humor, the quality of, 335–337.
Huts for shipwrecked sailors, 63, 74–78.

Indian habitation, signs of previous, 84, 85.
Italian discoverers, 234, 235.

Jeremiah's Gutter, 36.
Jerusalem Village (Mass.), 16.
Jesuits, early, in New England, 232.
Josselyn, John, quoted, 98.
Justice, the administration of, 395, 396.

Kalm, Travels in North America, quoted, 126, 201.
Kelp, 67–70.
Kossuth, the excitement about, 470, 471.

Last Days of John Brown, The, 441–450.
Legs, the, as compasses, 88.
Lescarbot, quoted, 240, 249.
Life without Principle, 455–482.
Living, getting a, 457–462.
Long Wharf, taking a place at, 267.
Loring, E. G., 389, 393, 394.
Love, the power of, 304, 305.

Mackerel, fishing for, 179–184, 189, 190; fleet, the, 198, 261.
Maps of Cape Cod and New England, 227–231, 234.
Marvell, Andrew, quoted, 451.
Massachusetts, the attitude of, towards slavery, 362, 363; duty of the Abolitionists in, 369; slavery in, 388; the Governor of, 389–392; judges, 401, 402; unworthy to be followed, 403–406; the share of, in Harper's Ferry, 430, 431.
Massachusetts Bay, shallowness of, 124.
Massachusetts Historical Society, Collections of the, 20.
Menhaden, schools of, 120.
Ministers, salaries of country, 45; some old Cape Cod, 48–55.
Minot's Ledge, the light on, 262, 263.
Mirages on sand and sea, 190–193.
Missouri Compromise, 408.
Moisture in Cape Cod air, 165.
Money, making, the evil of, 458–461.
Mount Ararat in Provincetown, 190.
Mourt's Relation, quoted, 38, 94, 251.

Nantasket (Mass.), 16.
Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, 31, 64.
Nauset Lights, 41.
Nebraska Bill, the, 403.
Newspapers, influence and servility of Boston, 398–400; and John Brown, 416, 417; evils of reading the, 471–476.
Nix's mate, story of, 267.
Northeaster, a, 204, 209–211.
Norumbega, 239.

Ocean, calm, rough, and fruitful, 124–128; beaches across the, 177, 178.

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October, the best season for visiting the Cape, 272.
Olata, the swift-sailing yacht, 265.
Organ-grinders on the Cape, 30.
Orleans (Mass.), 22; Higgins's tavern at, 29.
Osborn, the Rev. Samuel, 52, 53.

Paley, William, on Duty of Submission to Civil Government, quoted, 361, 362.
Pamet River, 134.
PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED, 280–305.
Parliament, provinciality of the English, 477, 478.
Pea, beach, 90, 206, 207.
Pear tree, the, planted by Thomas Prince, 43.
Penhallow, Samuel, History, quoted, 235.
Petrel, the storm, 114.
Phillips, Wendell, before the Concord Lyceum, 311; qualities of, as reformer and orator, 311–315.
Pilgrims, arrival of the, 251–257.
Pitch pine, tracts of, 22.
PLAINS OF NAUSET, THE, 31–56.
Plants, on Cape Cod beach, 111; about Highland Light, 135, 167; about the Clay Pounds, 165.
PLEA FOR JOHN BROWN, A, 409–440.
Pleasant Cove, in Cohasset, 18.
Plover, the piping of, 71.
Point Allerton, 15.
Politics, the unimportance of, 480–482.
Poluphloisboios Thalassa, the Rev., 67.
Pond Village, 142.
Ponds in Wellfleet, 89.
Post-office, the domestic, 24.
Postel, *Charte Géographique*, quoted, 249.
Poverty-grass, 25; as the Barnstable coat-of-arms, 135.
Press, influence and servility of, 397–400.
Prince, Thomas, 43.
Pring, Martin, New England discoveries of, 228, 229, 246, 247.
Prison, the true place for just men, 370; T. in Concord, 374–380.
PROVINCETOWN, 212–273.
Provincetown (Mass.), walking to, 31, 57, 58; Bank, T. suspected of robbing, 176, 177; approach to, 193; described, 195–197; fish, 212–215; boys, 218; Harbor, 225.
Provinciality, American and English, 477, 478.
Purple Sea, the, 119.

Race Point, 64, 193, 200.
Raleigh, Sir Walter, "The Soul's Errand" attributed to, 452.
Reforms in mechanics and ethics, 281–286.
Rogers, Nathaniel P., editor of Herald of Freedom, 306–308; quoted, 308–310.
"Rut," the, a sound before a change of wind, 97, 98.

St. George's Bank, 123, 124.
St. John, the wrecked brig, 6.
Salt, as manufactured by Captain John Sears, 27, 28; works, 218, 219.
Sand, blowing, 204; inroads of the, 204, 205; Provincetown, 220–223.
Sandwich (Mass.), 19; described, 20–22.
Schooner, origin of word, 199.
SEA AND THE DESERT, THE, 176–211.
Sea, the roar of the, 40, 66; remoteness of the bottom of the, 123.
Sea-fleas, 113.
Sears, Captain John, and salt manufacture, 27, 28.
SERVICE, THE: QUALITIES OF THE RECRUIT, 277–279.
Shank-Painter Swamp, 200, 217.
Sharks, 112, 113.
Shellfish on Cape Cod beach, 110, 111.
SHIPWRECK, THE, 1–18.
Signals, old clothes as, 22.
Simpkins, the Rev. John, quoted, 30.
Sims case, the, 390, 391.
Slavery, Massachusetts and, 362, 363; what it is, 394; how to deal with, 433, 434.
SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS, 388–408.
Smith, Captain John, quoted, 180, 255; map of New England by, 229.
Smoothness of ocean, 125.
Snow's Hollow, 61.

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Somerset, British ship of war, wrecked on Clay Pounds, 162.
Spanish discoverers, 234, 235.
STAGE-COACH VIEWS, 19–30.
Stone, the Rev. Nathan, 55.
Stones, rarity of, on Cape Cod, 223–225.
Style, literary, a man's, 325, 326, 330, 331.
Suet, in Dennis (Mass.), 27.
Sunday in Provincetown, 252, 253.
Sunshine, the power of, 290, 291.
Sun-squall, sea-jellies called, 70.
Suttle, Mr., of Virginia, 392.

Table-Lands of Eastham, 62.
Tacitus, translation by T. from, 452–454.
Taxes, T.'s experience with, 369, 370; in jail for refusal to pay, 374–381.
Thor-finn, and Thor-eau, 191, 192; voyage of, 247, 248.
Thoreau, Henry David, various visits to Cape Cod, 3; starts for Cape Cod, Oct. 9, 1849, 5; goes on a mackerel cruise, 182; takes leave of Cape Cod, 257; experience with taxes, 368, 370; in jail for unpaid taxes, 374–381.
Thorhall, the disappointment of, 187.
Thorn-apple, the, 14, 15.
Thorwald, voyage of, 247, 248.
Tide and waves, power of, 288–290.
"Trainers" in Concord, 392.
Travelers, good humor of, 23.
Treat, Rev. Samuel, 48–52.
Trees on Cape Cod, 129–131; disappearance of, 254, 255.
Truro (Mass.), 104, 137–139; the wreck of, 159.
Turtles, land and sea, 202.

"Uncle Bill," somebody's (or everybody's), 141.

Vallandigham, Clement L., quoted, 415, 428, 429.
"Veeshnoo Sarma," quoted, 303.
Vegetables in the oysterman's garden, 100.
Vessels seen from Cape Cod, 105, 106, 118, 120–123.
Voting, 363, 364, 402, 403.

Water, Cape Cod, 225.
Waves on the shore, 155–158.
Webb, Rev. Benjamin, 54, 55.
Webb's Island, the lost, 152.
Webster, Daniel, quoted, 125; the power of, 384, 385; quoted, 385; and the Fugitive Slave Law, 395.
WELLFLEET OYSTERMAN, THE, 79–102.
Wellfleet (Mass.) oysters, 82; Bellamy wrecked off, 160; a good headquarters for visitors to the Cape, 271.
WENDELL PHILLIPS BEFORE THE CONCORD LYCEUM, 311–315.
"When descends on the Atlantic," Longfellow, quoted, 69.
Whitehead, near Cohasset, 10.
Wind, power of the, 286–288.
Windmills, Cape Cod, 34, 35.
Windows in Cape Cod houses, 79, 80.
Winthrop, Gov., quoted, 236.
Wise, Henry A., quoted, 428.
Wise man, the, 462, 463.
Women, pinched-up, 24.
Wood, William, quoted, 85.
Wood End, wreck at, 259, 260.
Work, our excess of, 456.
Wreck, of the Franklin, 73; of Bellamy the pirate, 160, 161; of the British ship of war Somerset, 162; story of a man from a, 259, 260.
Wreckage, 115–117.
Wrecker, a Cape Cod, 59, 60.
Wrecks, Truro, 159; the consequences of, 163, 164.

Yarmouth (Mass.), 22.

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